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MERRY TALES

MARK TWAIN

Fiction, Fact, and Fancy Series

EDITED BY ARTHUR STEDMAN

MERRY TALES

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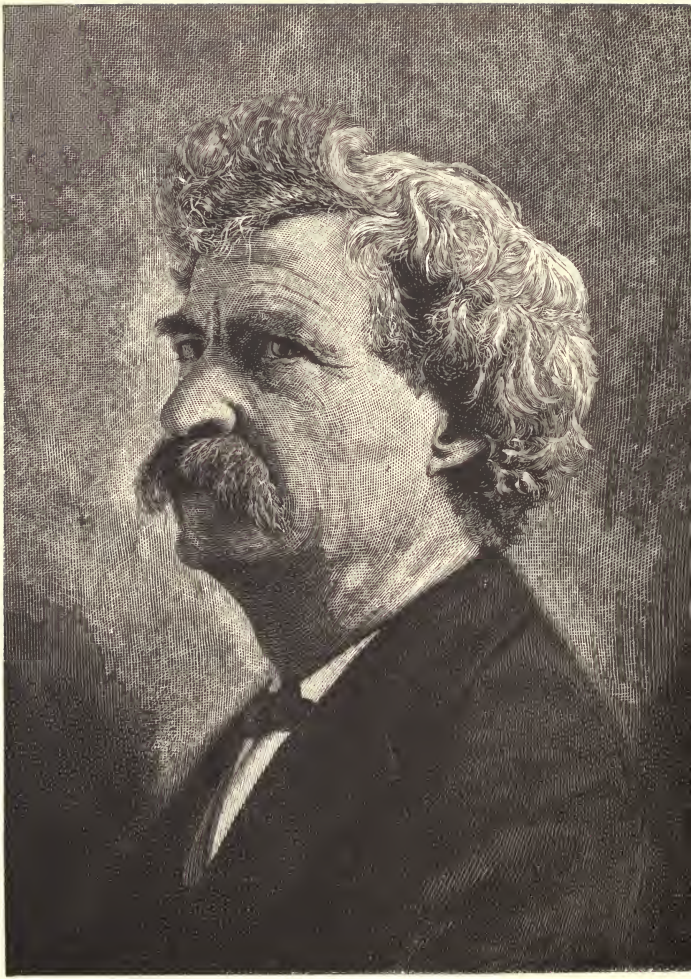

Mark Twain.

MERRY TALES

BY

MARK TWAIN

New York
CHARLES L. WEBSTER & CO.
1892

Merry Tales

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MERRY TALES.

THE PRIVATE HISTORY OF A CAMPAIGN THAT FAILED.

YOU have heard from a great many people who did something in the war; is it not fair and right that you listen a little moment to one who started out to do something in it, but didn't? Thousands entered the war, got just a taste of it, and then stepped out again, permanently. These, by their very numbers, are respectable, and are therefore entitled to a sort of voice,—not a loud one, but a modest one; not a boastful one, but an apologetic one. They ought not to be allowed much space among better people—people who did something—I grant that; but they ought at least to be allowed to state why they didn't do anything, and also to explain the process by which they didn't do anything. Surely this kind of light must have a sort of value.

Out West there was a good deal of confusion in men's minds during the first months of the great trouble—a good deal of unsettledness, of leaning first this way, then that, then the other way. It was hard for us to get our bearings. I call to mind an instance of this. I was piloting on the Mississippi when the news came that South Carolina had gone out of the Union on the 20th of December, 1860. My pilot-mate was a New Yorker. He was strong for the Union; so was I. But he would not listen to me with any patience; my loyalty was smirched, to his eye, because my father had owned slaves. I said, in palliation of this dark fact, that I had heard my father say, some years before he died, that slavery was a great wrong, and that he would free the solitary negro he then owned if he could think it right to give away the property of the family when he was so straitened in means. My mate retorted that a mere impulse was nothing—anybody could pretend to a good impulse; and went on decrying my Unionism and libeling my ancestry. A month later the secession atmosphere

had considerably thickened on the Lower Mississippi, and I became a rebel; so did he. We were together in New Orleans, the 26th of January, when Louisiana went out of the Union. He did his full share of the rebel shouting, but was bitterly opposed to letting me do mine. He said that I came of bad stock—of a father who had been willing to set slaves free. In the following summer he was piloting a Federal gun-boat and shouting for the Union again, and I was in the Confederate army. I held his note for some borrowed money. He was one of the most upright men I ever knew; but he repudiated that note without hesitation, because I was a rebel, and the son of a man who owned slaves.

In that summer—of 1861—the first wash of the wave of war broke upon the shores of Missouri. Our State was invaded by the Union forces. They took possession of St. Louis, Jefferson Barracks, and some other points. The Governor, Claib Jackson, issued his proclamation calling out fifty thousand militia to repel the invader.

I was visiting in the small town where my boyhood had been spent—Hannibal, Marion County. Several of us got together in a secret place by night and formed ourselves into a military company. One Tom Lyman, a young fellow of a good deal of spirit but of no military experience, was made captain; I was made second lieutenant. We had no first lieutenant; I do not know why; it was long ago. There were fifteen of us. By the advice of an innocent connected with the organization, we called ourselves the Marion Rangers. I do not remember that any one found fault with the name. I did not; I thought it sounded quite well. The young fellow who proposed this title was perhaps a fair sample of the kind of stuff we were made of. He was young, ignorant, good-natured, well-meaning, trivial, full of romance, and given to reading chivalric novels and singing forlorn love-ditties. He had some pathetic little nickel-plated aristocratic instincts, and detested his name, which was Dunlap; detested it, partly because it was nearly as common in that region as Smith,

but mainly because it had a plebeian sound to his ear. So he tried to ennoble it by writing it in this way: *d'Unlap*. That contented his eye, but left his ear unsatisfied, for people gave the new name the same old pronunciation—emphasis on the front end of it. He then did the bravest thing that can be imagined,—a thing to make one shiver when one remembers how the world is given to resenting shams and affectations; he began to write his name so: *d'Un Lap*. And he waited patiently through the long storm of mud that was flung at this work of art, and he had his reward at last; for he lived to see that name accepted, and the emphasis put where he wanted it, by people who had known him all his life, and to whom the tribe of Dunlaps had been as familiar as the rain and the sunshine for forty years. So sure of victory at last is the courage that can wait. He said he had found, by consulting some ancient French chronicles, that the name was rightly and originally written d'Un Lap; and said that if it were translated into English it would mean Peterson: *Lap*, Latin or Greek,

he said, for stone or rock, same as the French *pierre*, that is to say, Peter; *d'*, of or from; *un*, a or one; hence, d'Un Lap, of or from a stone or a Peter; that is to say, one who is the son of a stone, the son of a Peter—Peterson. Our militia company were not learned, and the explanation confused them; so they called him Peterson Dunlap. He proved useful to us in his way; he named our camps for us, and he generally struck a name that was "no slouch," as the boys said.

That is one sample of us. Another was Ed Stevens, son of the town jeweler,—trim-built, handsome, graceful, neat as a cat; bright, educated, but given over entirely to fun. There was nothing serious in life to him. As far as he was concerned, this military expedition of ours was simply a holiday. I should say that about half of us looked upon it in the same way; not consciously, perhaps, but unconsciously. We did not think; we were not capable of it. As for myself, I was full of unreasoning joy to be done with turning out of bed at midnight and four in the morning, for a while; grateful

to have a change, new scenes, new occupations, a new interest. In my thoughts that was as far as I went; I did not go into the details; as a rule one doesn't at twenty-four.

Another sample was Smith, the blacksmith's apprentice. This vast donkey had some pluck, of a slow and sluggish nature, but a soft heart; at one time he would knock a horse down for some impropriety, and at another he would get homesick and cry. However, he had one ultimate credit to his account which some of us hadn't: he stuck to the war, and was killed in battle at last.

Jo Bowers, another sample, was a huge, good-natured, flax-headed lubber; lazy, sentimental, full of harmless brag, a grumbler by nature; an experienced, industrious, ambitious, and often quite picturesque liar, and yet not a successful one, for he had had no intelligent training, but was allowed to come up just any way. This life was serious enough to him, and seldom satisfactory. But he was a good fellow anyway, and the boys all liked him. He

was made orderly sergeant; Stevens was made corporal.

These samples will answer—and they are quite fair ones. Well, this herd of cattle started for the war. What could you expect of them? They did as well as they knew how, but really what was justly to be expected of them? Nothing, I should say. That is what they did.

We waited for a dark night, for caution and secrecy were necessary; then, toward midnight, we stole in couples and from various directions to the Griffith place, beyond the town; from that point we set out together on foot. Hannibal lies at the extreme southeastern corner of Marion County, on the Mississippi River; our objective point was the hamlet of New London, ten miles away, in Ralls County.

The first hour was all fun, all idle nonsense and laughter. But that could not be kept up. The steady trudging came to be like work; the play had somehow oozed out of it; the stillness of the woods and the somberness of the night began to throw a depressing influence over the spirits of the boys, and presently the talking

died out and each person shut himself up in his own thoughts. During the last half of the second hour nobody said a word.

Now we approached a log farm-house where, according to report, there was a guard of five Union soldiers. Lyman called a halt; and there, in the deep gloom of the overhanging branches, he began to whisper a plan of assault upon that house, which made the gloom more depressing than it was before. It was a crucial moment; we realized, with a cold suddenness, that here was no jest—we were standing face to face with actual war. We were equal to the occasion. In our response there was no hesitation, no indecision: we said that if Lyman wanted to meddle with those soldiers, he could go ahead and do it; but if he waited for us to follow him, he would wait a long time.

Lyman urged, pleaded, tried to shame us, but it had no effect. Our course was plain, our minds were made up: we would flank the farm-house—go out around. And that is what we did.

We struck into the woods and entered upon

a rough time, stumbling over roots, getting tangled in vines, and torn by briers. At last we reached an open place in a safe region, and sat down, blown and hot, to cool off and nurse our scratches and bruises. Lyman was annoyed, but the rest of us were cheerful; we had flanked the farm-house, we had made our first military movement, and it was a success; we had nothing to fret about, we were feeling just the other way. Horse-play and laughing began again; the expedition was become a holiday frolic once more.

Then we had two more hours of dull trudging and ultimate silence and depression; then, about dawn, we straggled into New London, soiled, heel-blistered, fagged with our little march, and all of us except Stevens in a sour and raspy humor and privately down on the war. We stacked our shabby old shot-guns in Colonel Ralls's barn, and then went in a body and breakfasted with that veteran of the Mexican War. Afterwards he took us to a distant meadow, and there in the shade of a tree we listened to an old-fashioned speech from him,

full of gunpowder and glory, full of that adjective-piling, mixed metaphor, and windy declamation which was regarded as eloquence in that ancient time and that remote region; and then he swore us on the Bible to be faithful to the State of Missouri and drive all invaders from her soil, no matter whence they might come or under what flag they might march. This mixed us considerably, and we could not make out just what service we were embarked in; but Colonel Ralls, the practiced politician and phrase-juggler, was not similarly in doubt; he knew quite clearly that he had invested us in the cause of the Southern Confederacy. He closed the solemnities by belting around me the sword which his neighbor, Colonel Brown, had worn at Buena Vista and Molino del Rey; and he accompanied this act with another impressive blast.

Then we formed in line of battle and marched four miles to a shady and pleasant piece of woods on the border of the far-reaching expanses of a flowery prairie. It was an enchanting region for war—our kind of war.

We pierced the forest about half a mile, and took up a strong position, with some low, rocky, and wooded hills behind us, and a purling, limpid creek in front. Straightway half the command were in swimming, and the other half fishing. The ass with the French name gave this position a romantic title, but it was too long, so the boys shortened and simplified it to Camp Ralls.

We occupied an old maple-sugar camp, whose half-rotted troughs were still propped against the trees. A long corn-crib served for sleeping quarters for the battalion. On our left, half a mile away, was Mason's farm and house; and he was a friend to the cause. Shortly after noon the farmers began to arrive from several directions, with mules and horses for our use, and these they lent us for as long as the war might last, which they judged would be about three months. The animals were of all sizes, all colors, and all breeds. They were mainly young and frisky, and nobody in the command could stay on them long at a time; for we were town boys, and ignorant of horse-

manship. The creature that fell to my share was a very small mule, and yet so quick and active that it could throw me without difficulty; and it did this whenever I got on it. Then it would bray—stretching its neck out, laying its ears back, and spreading its jaws till you could see down to its works. It was a disagreeable animal, in every way. If I took it by the bridle and tried to lead it off the grounds, it would sit down and brace back, and no one could budge it. However, I was not entirely destitute of military resources, and I did presently manage to spoil this game; for I had seen many a steamboat aground in my time, and knew a trick or two which even a grounded mule would be obliged to respect. There was a well by the corn-crib; so I substituted thirty fathom of rope for the bridle, and fetched him home with the windlass.

I will anticipate here sufficiently to say that we did learn to ride, after some days' practice, but never well. We could not learn to like our animals; they were not choice ones, and most of them had annoying peculiarities of

one kind or another. Stevens's horse would carry him, when he was not noticing, under the huge excrescences which form on the trunks of oak-trees, and wipe him out of the saddle; in this way Stevens got several bad hurts. Sergeant Bowers's horse was very large and tall, with slim, long legs, and looked like a railroad bridge. His size enabled him to reach all about, and as far as he wanted to, with his head; so he was always biting Bowers's legs. On the march, in the sun, Bowers slept a good deal; and as soon as the horse recognized that he was asleep he would reach around and bite him on the leg. His legs were black and blue with bites. This was the only thing that could ever make him swear, but this always did; whenever the horse bit him he always swore, and of course Stevens, who laughed at everything, laughed at this, and would even get into such convulsions over it as to lose his balance and fall off his horse; and then Bowers, already irritated by the pain of the horse-bite, would resent the laughter with hard language, and there would be a

quarrel; so that horse made no end of trouble and bad blood in the command.

However, I will get back to where I was —our first afternoon in the sugar-camp. The sugar-troughs came very handy as horse-troughs, and we had plenty of corn to fill them with. I ordered Sergeant Bowers to feed my mule; but he said that if I reckoned he went to war to be dry-nurse to a mule, it wouldn't take me very long to find out my mistake. I believed that this was insubordination, but I was full of uncertainties about everything military, and so I let the thing pass, and went and ordered Smith, the blacksmith's apprentice, to feed the mule; but he merely gave me a large, cold, sarcastic grin, such as an ostensibly seven-year-old horse gives you when you lift his lip and find he is fourteen, and turned his back on me. I then went to the captain, and asked if it was not right and proper and military for me to have an orderly. He said it was, but as there was only one orderly in the corps, it was but right that he himself should have Bowers on his staff. Bowers said he

wouldn't serve on anybody's staff; and if anybody thought he could make him, let him try it. So, of course, the thing had to be dropped; there was no other way.

Next, nobody would cook; it was considered a degradation; so we had no dinner. We lazied the rest of the pleasant afternoon away, some dozing under the trees, some smoking cob-pipes and talking sweethearts and war, some playing games. By late supper-time all hands were famished; and to meet the difficulty all hands turned to, on an equal footing, and gathered wood, built fires, and cooked the meal. Afterward everything was smooth for a while; then trouble broke out between the corporal and the sergeant, each claiming to rank the other. Nobody knew which was the higher office; so Lyman had to settle the matter by making the rank of both officers equal. The commander of an ignorant crew like that has many troubles and vexations which probably do not occur in the regular army at all. However, with the song-singing and yarn-spinning around the camp-fire, every-

thing presently became serene again; and by and by we raked the corn down level in one end of the crib, and all went to bed on it, tying a horse to the door, so that he would neigh if any one tried to get in.*

We had some horsemanship drill every forenoon; then, afternoons, we rode off here and there in squads a few miles, and visited the farmers' girls, and had a youthful good time, and got an honest good dinner or supper, and then home again to camp, happy and content.

For a time, life was idly delicious, it was perfect; there was nothing to mar it. Then came some farmers with an alarm one day.

* It was always my impression that that was what the horse was there for, and I know that it was also the impression of at least one other of the command, for we talked about it at the time, and admired the military ingenuity of the device; but when I was out West three years ago I was told by Mr. A. G. Fuqua, a member of our company, that the horse was his, that the leaving him tied at the door was a matter of mere forgetfulness, and that to attribute it to intelligent invention was to give him quite too much credit. In support of his position, he called my attention to the suggestive fact that the artifice was not employed again. I had not thought of that before.

They said it was rumored that the enemy were advancing in our direction, from over Hyde's prairie. The result was a sharp stir among us, and general consternation. It was a rude awakening from our pleasant trance. The rumor was but a rumor—nothing definite about it; so, in the confusion, we did not know which way to retreat. Lyman was for not retreating at all, in these uncertain circumstances; but he found that if he tried to maintain that attitude he would fare badly, for the command were in no humor to put up with insubordination. So he yielded the point and called a council of war—to consist of himself and the three other officers; but the privates made such a fuss about being left out, that we had to allow them to remain, for they were already present, and doing the most of the talking too. The question was, which way to retreat; but all were so flurried that nobody seemed to have even a guess to offer. Except Lyman. He explained in a few calm words, that inasmuch as the enemy were approaching from over Hyde's prairie, our course was simple: all

we had to do was not to retreat *toward* him; any other direction would answer our needs perfectly. Everybody saw in a moment how true this was, and how wise; so Lyman got a great many compliments. It was now decided that we should fall back on Mason's farm.

It was after dark by this time, and as we could not know how soon the enemy might arrive, it did not seem best to try to take the horses and things with us; so we only took the guns and ammunition, and started at once. The route was very rough and hilly and rocky, and presently the night grew very black and rain began to fall; so we had a troublesome time of it, struggling and stumbling along in the dark; and soon some person slipped and fell, and then the next person behind stumbled over him and fell, and so did the rest, one after the other; and then Bowers came with the keg of powder in his arms, whilst the command were all mixed together, arms and legs, on the muddy slope; and so he fell, of course, with the keg, and this started the whole detachment down the hill in a body, and they landed in the brook at the

bottom in a pile, and each that was undermost pulling the hair and scratching and biting those that were on top of him; and those that were being scratched and bitten, scratching and biting the rest in their turn, and all saying they would die before they would ever go to war again if they ever got out of this brook this time, and the invader might rot for all they cared, and the country along with him—and all such talk as that, which was dismal to hear and take part in, in such smothered, low voices, and such a grisly dark place and so wet, and the enemy may be coming any moment.

The keg of powder was lost, and the guns too; so the growling and complaining continued straight along whilst the brigade pawed around the pasty hillside and slopped around in the brook hunting for these things; consequently we lost considerable time at this; and then we heard a sound, and held our breath and listened, and it seemed to be the enemy coming, though it could have been a cow, for it had a cough like a cow; but we did not wait, but left a couple of guns behind and struck out

for Mason's again as briskly as we could scramble along in the dark. But we got lost presently among the rugged little ravines, and wasted a deal of time finding the way again, so it was after nine when we reached Mason's stile at last; and then before we could open our mouths to give the countersign, several dogs came bounding over the fence, with great riot and noise, and each of them took a soldier by the slack of his trousers and began to back away with him. We could not shoot the dogs without endangering the persons they were attached to; so we had to look on, helpless, at what was perhaps the most mortifying spectacle of the civil war. There was light enough, and to spare, for the Masons had now run out on the porch with candles in their hands. The old man and his son came and undid the dogs without difficulty, all but Bowers's; but they couldn't undo his dog, they didn't know his combination; he was of the bull kind, and seemed to be set with a Yale time-lock; but they got him loose at last with some scalding water, of which Bowers got his share and re-

turned thanks. Peterson Dunlap afterwards made up a fine name for this engagement, and also for the night march which preceded it, but both have long ago faded out of my memory.

We now went into the house, and they began to ask us a world of questions, whereby it presently came out that we did not know anything concerning who or what we were running from; so the old gentleman made himself very frank, and said we were a curious breed of soldiers, and guessed we could be depended on to end up the war in time, because no government could stand the expense of the shoe-leather we should cost it trying to follow us around. "Marion *Rangers!* good name, b'gosh!" said he. And wanted to know why we hadn't had a picket-guard at the place where the road entered the prairie, and why we hadn't sent out a scouting party to spy out the enemy and bring us an account of his strength, and so on, before jumping up and stampeding out of a strong position upon a mere vague rumor—and so on, and so forth, till he made us all feel shabbier than the dogs had done, not half so

enthusiastically welcome. So we went to bed shamed and low-spirited; except Stevens. Soon Stevens began to devise a garment for Bowers which could be made to automatically display his battle-scars to the grateful, or conceal them from the envious, according to his occasions; but Bowers was in no humor for this, so there was a fight, and when it was over Stevens had some battle-scars of his own to think about.

Then we got a little sleep. But after all we had gone through, our activities were not over for the night; for about two o'clock in the morning we heard a shout of warning from down the lane, accompanied by a chorus from all the dogs, and in a moment everybody was up and flying around to find out what the alarm was about. The alarmist was a horseman who gave notice that a detachment of Union soldiers was on its way from Hannibal with orders to capture and hang any bands like ours which it could find, and said we had no time to lose. Farmer Mason was in a flurry this time, himself. He hurried us out of the house with

all haste, and sent one of his negroes with us to show us where to hide ourselves and our tell-tale guns among the ravines half a mile away. It was raining heavily.

We struck down the lane, then across some rocky pasture-land which offered good advantages for stumbling; consequently we were down in the mud most of the time, and every time a man went down he blackguarded the war, and the people that started it, and everybody connected with it, and gave himself the master dose of all for being so foolish as to go into it. At last we reached the wooded mouth of a ravine, and there we huddled ourselves under the streaming trees, and sent the negro back home. It was a dismal and heart-breaking time. We were like to be drowned with the rain, deafened with the howling wind and the booming thunder, and blinded by the lightning. It was indeed a wild night. The drenching we were getting was misery enough, but a deeper misery still was the reflection that the halter might end us before we were a day older. A death of this shameful sort had not oc-

curred to us as being among the possibilities of war. It took the romance all out of the campaign, and turned our dreams of glory into a repulsive nightmare. As for doubting that so barbarous an order had been given, not one of us did that.

The long night wore itself out at last, and then the negro came to us with the news that the alarm had manifestly been a false one, and that breakfast would soon be ready. Straightway we were light-hearted again, and the world was bright, and life as full of hope and promise as ever—for we were young then. How long ago that was! Twenty-four years.

The mongrel child of philology named the night's refuge Camp Devastation, and no soul objected. The Masons gave us a Missouri country breakfast, in Missourian abundance, and we needed it: hot biscuits; hot "wheat bread" prettily criss-crossed in a lattice pattern on top; hot corn pone; fried chicken; bacon, coffee, eggs, milk, buttermilk, etc.;—and the world may be confidently challenged

to furnish the equal to such a breakfast, as it is cooked in the South.

We staid several days at Mason's; and after all these years the memory of the dullness, the stillness and lifelessness of that slumberous farm-house still oppresses my spirit as with a sense of the presence of death and mourning. There was nothing to do, nothing to think about; there was no interest in life. The male part of the household were away in the fields all day, the women were busy and out of our sight; there was no sound but the plaintive wailing of a spinning-wheel, forever moaning out from some distant room,—the most lonesome sound in nature, a sound steeped and sodden with homesickness and the emptiness of life. The family went to bed about dark every night, and as we were not invited to intrude any new customs, we naturally followed theirs. Those nights were a hundred years long to youths accustomed to being up till twelve. We lay awake and miserable till that hour every time, and grew old and decrepit waiting through the still eternities for the

clock-strikes. This was no place for town boys. So at last it was with something very like joy that we received news that the enemy were on our track again. With a new birth of the old warrior spirit, we sprang to our places in line of battle and fell back on Camp Ralls.

Captain Lyman had taken a hint from Mason's talk, and he now gave orders that our camp should be guarded against surprise by the posting of pickets. I was ordered to place a picket at the forks of the road in Hyde's prairie. Night shut down black and threatening. I told Sergeant Bowers to go out to that place and stay till midnight; and, just as I was expecting, he said he wouldn't do it. I tried to get others to go, but all refused. Some excused themselves on account of the weather; but the rest were frank enough to say they wouldn't go in any kind of weather. This kind of thing sounds odd now, and impossible, but there was no surprise in it at the time. On the contrary, it seemed a perfectly natural thing to do. There were scores of little camps scattered over Missouri where the same thing

was happening. These camps were composed of young men who had been born and reared to a sturdy independence, and who did not know what it meant to be ordered around by Tom, Dick, and Harry, whom they had known familiarly all their lives, in the village or on the farm. It is quite within the probabilities that this same thing was happening all over the South. James Redpath recognized the justice of this assumption, and furnished the following instance in support of it. During a short stay in East Tennessee he was in a citizen colonel's tent one day, talking, when a big private appeared at the door, and without salute or other circumlocution said to the colonel,—

"Say, Jim, I'm a-goin' home for a few days."

"What for?"

"Well, I hain't b'en there for a right smart while, and I'd like to see how things is comin' on."

"How long are you going to be gone?"

"'Bout two weeks."

"Well, don't be gone longer than that; and get back sooner if you can."

That was all, and the citizen officer resumed his conversation where the private had broken it off. This was in the first months of the war, of course. The camps in our part of Missouri were under Brigadier-General Thomas H. Harris. He was a townsman of ours, a first-rate fellow, and well liked; but we had all familiarly known him as the sole and modest-salaried operator in our telegraph office, where he had to send about one dispatch a week in ordinary times, and two when there was a rush of business; consequently, when he appeared in our midst one day, on the wing, and delivered a military command of some sort, in a large military fashion, nobody was surprised at the response which he got from the assembled soldiery,—

"Oh, now, what'll you take to *don't*, Tom Harris!"

It was quite the natural thing. One might justly imagine that we were hopeless material for war. And so we seemed, in our ignorant state; but there were those among us who afterward learned the grim trade; learned to

obey like machines; became valuable soldiers; fought all through the war, and came out at the end with excellent records. One of the very boys who refused to go out on picket duty that night, and called me an ass for thinking he would expose himself to danger in such a foolhardy way, had become distinguished for intrepidity before he was a year older.

I did secure my picket that night—not by authority, but by diplomacy. I got Bowers to go, by agreeing to exchange ranks with him for the time being, and go along and stand the watch with him as his subordinate. We staid out there a couple of dreary hours in the pitchy darkness and the rain, with nothing to modify the dreariness but Bowers's monotonous growlings at the war and the weather; then we began to nod, and presently found it next to impossible to stay in the saddle; so we gave up the tedious job, and went back to the camp without waiting for the relief guard. We rode into camp without interruption or objection from anybody, and the enemy could have done the same, for there were no sentries.

Everybody was asleep; at midnight there was nobody to send out another picket, so none was sent. We never tried to establish a watch at night again, as far as I remember, but we generally kept a picket out in the daytime.

In that camp the whole command slept on the corn in the big corn-crib; and there was usually a general row before morning, for the place was full of rats, and they would scramble over the boys' bodies and faces, annoying and irritating everybody; and now and then they would bite some one's toe, and the person who owned the toe would start up and magnify his English and begin to throw corn in the dark. The ears were half as heavy as bricks, and when they struck they hurt. The persons struck would respond, and inside of five minutes every man would be locked in a death-grip with his neighbor. There was a grievous deal of blood shed in the corn-crib, but this was all that was spilt while I was in the war. No, that is not quite true. But for one circumstance it would have been all. I will come to that now.

Our scares were frequent. Every few days rumors would come that the enemy were approaching. In these cases we always fell back on some other camp of ours; we never staid where we were. But the rumors always turned out to be false; so at last even we began to grow indifferent to them. One night a negro was sent to our corn-crib with the same old warning: the enemy was hovering in our neighborhood. We all said let him hover. We resolved to stay still and be comfortable. It was a fine warlike resolution, and no doubt we all felt the stir of it in our veins—for a moment. We had been having a very jolly time, that was full of horse-play and school-boy hilarity; but that cooled down now, and presently the fast-waning fire of forced jokes and forced laughs died out altogether, and the company became silent. Silent and nervous. And soon uneasy — worried — apprehensive. We had said we would stay, and we were committed. We could have been persuaded to go, but there was nobody brave enough to suggest it. An almost noiseless movement pres-

ently began in the dark, by a general but unvoiced impulse. When the movement was completed, each man knew that he was not the only person who had crept to the front wall and had his eye at a crack between the logs. No, we were all there; all there with our hearts in our throats, and staring out toward the sugar-troughs where the forest foot-path came through. It was late, and was a deep woodsy stillness everywhere. There was a veiled moonlight, which was only just strong enough to enable us to mark the general shape of objects. Presently a muffled sound caught our ears, and we recognized it as the hoof-beats of a horse or horses. And right away a figure appeared in the forest path; it could have been made of smoke, its mass had so little sharpness of outline. It was a man on horseback; and it seemed to me that there were others behind him. I got hold of a gun in the dark, and pushed it through a crack between the logs, hardly knowing what I was doing, I was so dazed with fright. Somebody said "Fire!" I pulled the trigger. I seemed

to see a hundred flashes and hear a hundred reports, then I saw the man fall down out of the saddle. My first feeling was of surprised gratification; my first impulse was an apprentice-sportsman's impulse to run and pick up his game. Somebody said, hardly audibly, "Good—we've got him! — wait for the rest." But the rest did not come. We waited — listened—still no more came. There was not a sound, not the whisper of a leaf; just perfect stillness; an uncanny kind of stillness, which was all the more uncanny on account of the damp, earthy, late-night smells now rising and pervading it. Then, wondering, we crept stealthily out, and approached the man. When we got to him the moon revealed him distinctly. He was lying on his back, with his arms abroad; his mouth was open and his chest heaving with long gasps, and his white shirt-front was all splashed with blood. The thought shot through me that I was a murderer; that I had killed a man—a man who had never done me any harm. That was the coldest sensation that ever went through my

marrow. I was down by him in a moment, helplessly stroking his forehead; and I would have given anything then—my own life freely —to make him again what he had been five minutes before. And all the boys seemed to be feeling in the same way; they hung over him, full of pitying interest, and tried all they could to help him, and said all sorts of regretful things. They had forgotten all about the enemy; they thought only of this one forlorn unit of the foe. Once my imagination persuaded me that the dying man gave me a reproachful look out of his shadowy eyes, and it seemed to me that I could rather he had stabbed me than done that. He muttered and mumbled like a dreamer in his sleep, about his wife and his child; and I thought with a new despair, "This thing that I have done does not end with him; it falls upon *them* too, and they never did me any harm, any more than he."

In a little while the man was dead. He was killed in war; killed in fair and legitimate war; killed in battle, as you may say; and yet he

was as sincerely mourned by the opposing force as if he had been their brother. The boys stood there a half hour sorrowing over him, and recalling the details of the tragedy, and wondering who he might be, and if he were a spy, and saying that if it were to do over again they would not hurt him unless he attacked them first. It soon came out that mine was not the only shot fired; there were five others,—a division of the guilt which was a grateful relief to me, since it in some degree lightened and diminished the burden I was carrying. There were six shots fired at once; but I was not in my right mind at the time, and my heated imagination had magnified my one shot into a volley.

The man was not in uniform, and was not armed. He was a stranger in the country; that was all we ever found out about him. The thought of him got to preying upon me every night; I could not get rid of it. I could not drive it away, the taking of that unoffending life seemed such a wanton thing. And it seemed an epitome of war; that all war must

be just that—the killing of strangers against whom you feel no personal animosity; strangers whom, in other circumstances, you would help if you found them in trouble, and who would help you if you needed it. My campaign was spoiled. It seemed to me that I was not rightly equipped for this awful business; that war was intended for men, and I for a child's nurse. I resolved to retire from this avocation of sham soldiership while I could save some remnant of my self-respect. These morbid thoughts clung to me against reason; for at bottom I did not believe I had touched that man. The law of probabilities decreed me guiltless of his blood; for in all my small experience with guns I had never hit anything I had tried to hit, and I knew I had done my best to hit him. Yet there was no solace in the thought. Against a diseased imagination, demonstration goes for nothing.

The rest of my war experience was of a piece with what I have already told of it. We kept monotonously falling back upon one camp or another, and eating up the country.

I marvel now at the patience of the farmers and their families. They ought to have shot us; on the contrary, they were as hospitably kind and courteous to us as if we had deserved it. In one of these camps we found Ab Grimes, an Upper Mississippi pilot, who afterwards became famous as a dare-devil rebel spy, whose career bristled with desperate adventures. The look and style of his comrades suggested that they had not come into the war to play, and their deeds made good the conjecture later. They were fine horsemen and good revolver-shots; but their favorite arm was the lasso. Each had one at his pommel, and could snatch a man out of the saddle with it every time, on a full gallop, at any reasonable distance.

In another camp the chief was a fierce and profane old blacksmith of sixty, and he had furnished his twenty recruits with gigantic home-made bowie-knives, to be swung with the two hands, like the *machetes* of the Isthmus. It was a grisly spectacle to see that earnest band practicing their murderous cuts

and slashes under the eye of that remorseless old fanatic.

The last camp which we fell back upon was in a hollow near the village of Florida, where I was born — in Monroe County. Here we were warned, one day, that a Union colonel was sweeping down on us with a whole regiment at his heels. This looked decidedly serious. Our boys went apart and consulted; then we went back and told the other companies present that the war was a disappointment to us and we were going to disband. They were getting ready, themselves, to fall back on some place or other, and were only waiting for General Tom Harris, who was expected to arrive at any moment; so they tried to persuade us to wait a little while, but the majority of us said no, we were accustomed to falling back, and didn't need any of Tom Harris's help; we could get along perfectly well without him—and save time too. So about half of our fifteen, including myself, mounted and left on the instant; the others yielded to persuasion and staid—staid through the war.

An hour later we met General Harris on the road, with two or three people in his company —his staff, probably, but we could not tell; none of them were in uniform; uniforms had not come into vogue among us yet. Harris ordered us back; but we told him there was a Union colonel coming with a whole regiment in his wake, and it looked as if there was going to be a disturbance; so we had concluded to go home. He raged a little, but it was of no use; our minds were made up. We had done our share; had killed one man, exterminated one army, such as it was; let him go and kill the rest, and that would end the war. I did not see that brisk young general again until last year; then he was wearing white hair and whiskers.

In time I came to know that Union colonel whose coming frightened me out of the war and crippled the Southern cause to that extent —General Grant. I came within a few hours of seeing him when he was as unknown as I was myself; at a time when anybody could have said, "Grant?—Ulysses S. Grant? I do

not remember hearing the name before." It seems difficult to realize that there was once a time when such a remark could be rationally made; but there *was*, and I was within a few miles of the place and the occasion too, though proceeding in the other direction.

The thoughtful will not throw this war-paper of mine lightly aside as being valueless. It has this value: it is a not unfair picture of what went on in many and many a militia camp in the first months of the rebellion, when the green recruits were without discipline, without the steadying and heartening influence of trained leaders; when all their circumstances were new and strange, and charged with exaggerated terrors, and before the invaluable experience of actual collision in the field had turned them from rabbits into soldiers. If this side of the picture of that early day has not before been put into history, then history has been to that degree incomplete, for it had and has its rightful place there. There was more Bull Run material scattered through the early camps of this country than exhibited

itself at Bull Run. And yet it learned its trade presently, and helped to fight the great battles later. I could have become a soldier myself, if I had waited. I had got part of it learned; I knew more about retreating than the man that invented retreating.

THE INVALID'S STORY.

I SEEM sixty and married, but these effects are due to my condition and sufferings, for I am a bachelor, and only forty-one. It will be hard for you to believe that I, who am now but a shadow, was a hale, hearty man two short years ago,—a man of iron, a very athlete! —yet such is the simple truth. But stranger still than this fact is the way in which I lost my health. I lost it through helping to take care of a box of guns on a two-hundred-mile railway journey one winter's night. It is the actual truth, and I will tell you about it.

I belong in Cleveland, Ohio. One winter's night, two years ago, I reached home just after dark, in a driving snow-storm, and the first thing I heard when I entered the house was that my dearest boyhood friend and schoolmate, John B. Hackett, had died the day before, and that his last utterance had been a

desire that I would take his remains home to his poor old father and mother in Wisconsin. I was greatly shocked and grieved, but there was no time to waste in emotions; I must start at once. I took the card, marked "Deacon Levi Hackett, Bethlehem, Wisconsin," and hurried off through the whistling storm to the railway station. Arrived there I found the long white-pine box which had been described to me; I fastened the card to it with some tacks, saw it put safely aboard the express car, and then ran into the eating-room to provide myself with a sandwich and some cigars. When I returned, presently, there was my coffin-box *back again*, apparently, and a young fellow examining around it, with a card in his hand, and some tacks and a hammer! I was astonished and puzzled. He began to nail on his card, and I rushed out to the express car, in a good deal of a state of mind, to ask for an explanation. But no—there was my box, all right, in the express car; it hadn't been disturbed. [The fact is that without my suspecting it a prodigious mistake had been made. I

was carrying off a box of *guns* which that young fellow had come to the station to ship to a rifle company in Peoria, Illinois, and *he* had got my corpse!] Just then the conductor sung out "All aboard," and I jumped into the express car and got a comfortable seat on a bale of buckets. The expressman was there, hard at work,—a plain man of fifty, with a simple, honest, good-natured face, and a breezy, practical heartiness in his general style. As the train moved off a stranger skipped into the car and set a package of peculiarly mature and capable Limburger cheese on one end of my coffin-box—I mean my box of guns. That is to say, I know *now* that it was Limburger cheese, but at that time I never had heard of the article in my life, and of course was wholly ignorant of its character. Well, we sped through the wild night, the bitter storm raged on, a cheerless misery stole over me, my heart went down, down, down! The old expressman made a brisk remark or two about the tempest and the arctic weather, slammed his sliding doors to, and bolted them, closed his

window down tight, and then went bustling around, here and there and yonder, setting things to rights, and all the time contentedly humming "Sweet By and By," in a low tone, and flatting a good deal. Presently I began to detect a most evil and searching odor stealing about on the frozen air. This depressed my spirits still more, because of course I attributed it to my poor departed friend. There was something infinitely saddening about his calling himself to my remembrance in this dumb pathetic way, so it was hard to keep the tears back. Moreover, it distressed me on account of the old expressman, who, I was afraid, might notice it. However, he went humming tranquilly on, and gave no sign; and for this I was grateful. Grateful, yes, but still uneasy; and soon I began to feel more and more uneasy every minute, for every minute that went by that odor thickened up the more, and got to be more and more gamey and hard to stand. Presently, having got things arranged to his satisfaction, the expressman got some wood and made up a tremendous fire in his stove.

This distressed me more than I can tell, for I could not but feel that it was a mistake. I was sure that the effect would be deleterious upon my poor departed friend. Thompson — the expressman's name was Thompson, as I found out in the course of the night—now went poking around his car, stopping up whatever stray cracks he could find, remarking that it didn't make any difference what kind of a night it was outside, he calculated to make *us* comfortable, anyway. I said nothing, but I believed he was not choosing the right way. Meantime he was humming to himself just as before; and meantime, too, the stove was getting hotter and hotter, and the place closer and closer. I felt myself growing pale and qualmish, but grieved in silence and said nothing. Soon I noticed that the "Sweet By and By" was gradually fading out; next it ceased altogether, and there was an ominous stillness. After a few moments Thompson said,—

"Pfew! I reckon it ain't no cinnamon 't I've loaded up thish-yer stove with!"

He gasped once or twice, then moved toward

the cof—gun-box, stood over that Limburger cheese part of a moment, then came back and sat down near me, looking a good deal impressed. After a contemplative pause, he said, indicating the box with a gesture,—

"Friend of yourn?"

"Yes," I said with a sigh.

"He's pretty ripe, *ain't* he!"

Nothing further was said for perhaps a couple of minutes, each being busy with his own thoughts; then Thompson said, in a low, awed voice,—

"Sometimes it's uncertain whether they're really gone or not,—*seem* gone, you know—body warm, joints limber—and so, although you *think* they're gone, you don't really know. I've had cases in my car. It's perfectly awful, becuz *you* don't know what minute they'll rise up and look at you!" Then, after a pause, and slightly lifting his elbow toward the box,—"But *he* ain't in no trance! No, sir, I go bail for *him!*"

We sat some time, in meditative silence, listening to the wind and the roar of the train;

then Thompson said, with a good deal of feeling,—

"Well-a-well, we've all got to go, they ain't no getting around it. Man that is born of woman is of few days and far between, as Scriptur' says. Yes, you look at it any way you want to, it's awful solemn and cur'us: they ain't *nobody* can get around it; *all's* got to go —just *everybody*, as you may say. One day you're hearty and strong"—here he scrambled to his feet and broke a pane and stretched his nose out at it a moment or two, then sat down again while I struggled up and thrust my nose out at the same place, and this we kept on doing every now and then—"and next day he's cut down like the grass, and the places which knowed him then knows him no more forever, as Scriptur' says. Yes'ndeedy, it's awful solemn and cur'us; but we've all got to go, one time or another; they ain't no getting around it."

There was another long pause; then,—

"What did he die of?"

I said I didn't know.

"How long has he ben dead?"

It seemed judicious to enlarge the facts to fit the probabilities; so I said,—

"Two or three days."

But it did no good; for Thompson received it with an injured look which plainly said, "Two or three *years*, you mean." Then he went right along, placidly ignoring my statement, and gave his views at considerable length upon the unwisdom of putting off burials too long. Then he lounged off toward the box, stood a moment, then came back on a sharp trot and visited the broken pane, observing,—

"'Twould 'a' ben a dum sight better, all around, if they'd started him along last summer."

Thompson sat down and buried his face in his red silk handkerchief, and began to slowly sway and rock his body like one who is doing his best to endure the almost unendurable. By this time the fragrance—if you may call it fragrance—was just about suffocating, as near as you can come at it. Thompson's face was turn-

ing gray; I knew mine hadn't any color left in it. By and by Thompson rested his forehead in his left hand, with his elbow on his knee, and sort of waved his red handkerchief towards the box with his other hand, and said,—

"I've carried a many a one of 'em,—some of 'em considerable overdue, too,—but, lordy, he just lays over 'em all!—and does it *easy*. Cap., they was heliotrope to *him!*"

This recognition of my poor friend gratified me, in spite of the sad circumstances, because it had so much the sound of a compliment.

Pretty soon it was plain that something had got to be done. I suggested cigars. Thompson thought it was a good idea. He said,—

"Likely it'll modify him some."

We puffed gingerly along for a while, and tried hard to imagine that things were improved. But it wasn't any use. Before very long, and without any consultation, both cigars were quietly dropped from our nerveless fingers at the same moment. Thompson said, with a sigh,—

"No, Cap., it don't modify him worth a cent.

Fact is, it makes him worse, becuz it appears to stir up his ambition. What do you reckon we better do, now?"

I was not able to suggest anything; indeed, I had to be swallowing and swallowing, all the time, and did not like to trust myself to speak. Thompson fell to maundering, in a desultory and low-spirited way, about the miserable experiences of this night; and he got to referring to my poor friend by various titles,—sometimes military ones, sometimes civil ones; and I noticed that as fast as my poor friend's effectiveness grew, Thompson promoted him accordingly,—gave him a bigger title. Finally he said,—

"I've got an idea. Suppos'n we buckle down to it and give the Colonel a bit of a shove towards t'other end of the car?—about ten foot, say. He wouldn't have so much influence, then, don't you reckon?"

I said it was a good scheme. So we took in a good fresh breath at the broken pane, calculating to hold it till we got through; then we went there and bent over that deadly cheese

and took a grip on the box. Thompson nodded "All ready," and then we threw ourselves forward with all our might; but Thompson slipped, and slumped down with his nose on the cheese, and his breath got loose. He gagged and gasped, and floundered up and made a break for the door, pawing the air and saying, hoarsely, "Don't hender me !—gimme the road ! I'm a-dying; gimme the road !" Out on the cold platform I sat down and held his head a while, and he revived. Presently he said,—

"Do you reckon we started the Gen'rul any ?"

I said no; we hadn't budged him.

"Well, then, *that* idea's up the flume. We got to think up something else. He's suited wher' he is, I reckon ; and if that's the way he feels about it, and has made up his mind that he don't wish to be disturbed, you bet he's a-going to have his own way in the business. Yes, better leave him right wher' he is, long as he wants it so ; becuz he holds all the trumps, don't you know, and so it stands to reason

that the man that lays out to alter his plans for him is going to get left.'

But we couldn't stay out there in that mad storm; we should have frozen to death. So we went in again and shut the door, and began to settle once more and take turns at the break in the window. By and by as we were starting away from a station where we had stopped a moment Thompson growled in disgust and excitement —

'We're all right now. I reckon we've got the Commissioners this time. I judge I've got the stuff here that'll take the nick out of him.'

It was carbolic acid. He had a carboy of it. He sprinkled it all around everywhere. It had to drench the everything with it, tile-boxes, cheese and all. Then we sat down, feeling pretty hopeful. But it wasn't for long. Two or the two gentlemen began to sick, and then —well, pretty soon we made a break for the door; and out there Thompson swabbed his face with his handkerchief and said in a kind of disheartened way —

'It ain't no use. We can't buck agin him.

He just utilizes everything we put up to modify him with, and gives it his own flavor and plays it back on us. Why, Cap., don't you know, it's as much as a hundred times worse in there now than it was when he first got a-going. I never *did* see one of 'em warm up to his work so, and take such a dumnation interest in it. No, sir, I never did, as long as I've ben on the road; and I've carried a many a one of 'em, as I was telling you."

We went in again, after we were frozen pretty stiff; but my, we couldn't *stay* in, now. So we just waltzed back and forth, freezing, and thawing, and stifling, by turns. In about an hour we stopped at another station; and as we left it Thompson came in with a bag, and said,—

"Cap., I'm a-going to chance him once more,—just this once; and if we don't fetch him this time, the thing for us to do, is to just throw up the sponge and withdraw from the canvass. That's the way *I* put it up."

He had brought a lot of chicken feathers, and dried apples, and leaf tobacco, and rags,

and old shoes, and sulphur, and assafœtida, and one thing or another; and he piled them on a breadth of sheet iron in the middle of the floor, and set fire to them. When they got well started, I couldn't see, myself, how even the corpse could stand it. All that went before was just simply poetry to that smell,—but mind you, the original smell stood up out of it just as sublime as ever,—fact is, these other smells just seemed to give it a better hold; and my, how rich it was! I didn't make these reflections there — there wasn't time — made them on the platform. And breaking for the platform, Thompson got suffocated and fell; and before I got him dragged out, which I did by the collar, I was mighty near gone myself. When we revived, Thompson said dejectedly,—

"We got to stay out here, Cap. We got to do it. They ain't no other way. The Governor wants to travel alone, and he's fixed so he can outvote us."

And presently he added,—

"And don't you know, we're *pisoned*. It's

our last trip, you can make up your mind to it. Typhoid fever is what's going to come of this. I feel it a-coming right now. Yes, sir, we're elected, just as sure as you're born."

We were taken from the platform an hour later, frozen and insensible, at the next station, and I went straight off into a virulent fever, and never knew anything again for three weeks. I found out, then, that I had spent that awful night with a harmless box of rifles and a lot of innocent cheese; but the news was too late to save *me;* imagination had done its work, and my health was permanently shattered; neither Bermuda nor any other land can ever bring it back to me. This is my last trip; I am on my way home to die.

LUCK.

IT was at a banquet in London in honor of one of the two or three conspicuously illustrious English military names of this generation. For reasons which will presently appear, I will withhold his real name and titles, and call him Lieutenant-General Lord Arthur Scoresby, Y.C., K.C.B., etc., etc., etc. What a fascination there is in a renowned name! There sat the man, in actual flesh, whom I had heard of so many thousands of times since that day, thirty years before, when his name shot suddenly to the zenith from a Crimean battle-field, to remain forever celebrated. It was food and drink to me to look, and look, and look at that demigod; scanning, searching, noting: the quietness, the reserve, the noble gravity of his countenance; the simple honesty that ex-

[NOTE.—This is not a fancy sketch. I got it from a clergyman who was an instructor at Woolwich forty years ago, and who vouched for its truth.—M. T.]

pressed itself all over him; the sweet unconsciousness of his greatness—unconsciousness of the hundreds of admiring eyes fastened upon him, unconsciousness of the deep, loving, sincere worship welling out of the breasts of those people and flowing toward him.

The clergyman at my left was an old acquaintance of mine—clergyman now, but had spent the first half of his life in the camp and field, and as an instructor in the military school at Woolwich. Just at the moment I have been talking about, a veiled and singular light glimmered in his eyes, and he leaned down and muttered confidentially to me—indicating the hero of the banquet with a gesture,—

"Privately—he's an absolute fool."

This verdict was a great surprise to me. If its subject had been Napoleon, or Socrates, or Solomon, my astonishment could not have been greater. Two things I was well aware of: that the Reverend was a man of strict veracity, and that his judgment of men was good. Therefore I knew, beyond doubt or

question, that the world was mistaken about this hero: he *was* a fool. So I meant to find out, at a convenient moment, how the Reverend, all solitary and alone, had discovered the secret.

Some days later the opportunity came, and this is what the Reverend told me:

About forty years ago I was an instructor in the military academy at Woolwich. I was present in one of the sections when young Scoresby underwent his preliminary examination. I was touched to the quick with pity; for the rest of the class answered up brightly and handsomely, while he—why, dear me, he didn't know *anything*, so to speak. He was evidently good, and sweet, and lovable, and guileless; and so it was exceedingly painful to see him stand there, as serene as a graven image, and deliver himself of answers which were veritably miraculous for stupidity and ignorance. All the compassion in me was aroused in his behalf. I said to myself, when he comes to be examined again, he will be

flung over, of course; so it will be simply a harmless act of charity to ease his fall as much as I can. I took him aside, and found that he knew a little of Cæsar's history; and as he didn't know anything else, I went to work and drilled him like a galley-slave on a certain line of stock questions concerning Cæsar which I knew would be used. If you'll believe me, he went through with flying colors on examination day! He went through on that purely superficial "cram," and got compliments too, while others, who knew a thousand times more than he, got plucked. By some strangely lucky accident—an accident not likely to happen twice in a century—he was asked no question outside of the narrow limits of his drill.

It was stupefying. Well, all through his course I stood by him, with something of the sentiment which a mother feels for a crippled child; and he always saved himself—just by miracle, apparently.

Now of course the thing that would expose him and kill him at last was mathematics. I resolved to make his death as easy as I could;

so I drilled him and crammed him, and crammed him and drilled him, just on the line of questions which the examiners would be most likely to use, and then launched him on his fate. Well, sir, try to conceive of the result: to my consternation, he took the first prize! And with it he got a perfect ovation in the way of compliments.

Sleep? There was no more sleep for me for a week. My conscience tortured me day and night. What I had done I had done purely through charity, and only to ease the poor youth's fall—I never had dreamed of any such preposterous result as the thing that had happened. I felt as guilty and miserable as the creator of Frankenstein. Here was a woodenhead whom I had put in the way of glittering promotions and prodigious responsibilities, and but one thing could happen: he and his responsibilities would all go to ruin together at the first opportunity.

The Crimean war had just broken out. Of course there had to be a war, I said to myself: we couldn't have peace and give this donkey a

chance to die before he is found out. I waited for the earthquake. It came. And it made me reel when it did come. He was actually gazetted to a captaincy in a marching regiment! Better men grow old and gray in the service before they climb to a sublimity like that. And who could ever have foreseen that they would go and put such a load of responsibility on such green and inadequate shoulders? I could just barely have stood it if they had made him a cornet; but a captain —think of it! I thought my hair would turn white.

Consider what I did—I who so loved repose and inaction. I said to myself, I am responsible to the country for this, and I must go along with him and protect the country against him as far as I can. So I took my poor little capital that I had saved up through years of work and grinding economy, and went with a sigh and bought a cornetcy in his regiment, and away we went to the field.

And there—oh dear, it was awful. Blunders?—why, he never did anything *but* blun-

der. But, you see, nobody was in the fellow's secret—everybody had him focussed wrong, and necessarily misinterpreted his performance every time—consequently they took his idiotic blunders for inspirations of genius; they did, honestly! His mildest blunders were enough to make a man in his right mind cry; and they did make me cry—and rage and rave too, privately. And the thing that kept me always in a sweat of apprehension was the fact that every fresh blunder he made increased the lustre of his reputation! I kept saying to myself, he'll get so high, that when discovery does finally come, it will be like the sun falling out of the sky.

He went right along up, from grade to grade, over the dead bodies of his superiors, until at last, in the hottest moment of the battle of * * * * down went our colonel, and my heart jumped into my mouth, for Scoresby was next in rank! Now for it, said I; we'll all land in Sheol in ten minutes, sure.

The battle was awfully hot; the allies were steadily giving way all over the field. Our

regiment occupied a position that was vital; a blunder now must be destruction. At this crucial moment, what does this immortal fool do but detach the regiment from its place and order a charge over a neighboring hill where there wasn't a suggestion of an enemy! "There you go!" I said to myself; "this *is* the end at last."

And away we did go, and were over the shoulder of the hill before the insane movement could be discovered and stopped. And what did we find? An entire and unsuspected Russian army in reserve! And what happened? We were eaten up? That is necessarily what would have happened in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred. But no; those Russians argued that no single regiment would come browsing around there at such a time. It must be the entire English army, and that the sly Russian game was detected and blocked; so they turned tail, and away they went, pell-mell, over the hill and down into the field, in wild confusion, and we after them; they themselves broke the solid Russian centre in the

field, and tore through, and in no time there was the most tremendous rout you ever saw, and the defeat of the allies was turned into a sweeping and splendid victory! Marshal Canrobert looked on, dizzy with astonishment, admiration, and delight; and sent right off for Scoresby, and hugged him, and decorated him on the field, in presence of all the armies!

And what was Scoresby's blunder that time? Merely the mistaking his right hand for his left—that was all. An order had come to him to fall back and support our right; and instead, he fell *forward* and went over the hill to the left. But the name he won that day as a marvellous military genius filled the world with his glory, and that glory will never fade while history books last.

He is just as good and sweet and lovable and unpretending as a man can be, but he doesn't know enough to come in when it rains. Now that is absolutely true. He is the supremest ass in the universe; and until half an hour ago nobody knew it but himself and me. He has been pursued, day by day and year by year, by

a most phenomenal and astonishing luckiness. He has been a shining soldier in all our wars for a generation; he has littered his whole military life with blunders, and yet has never committed one that didn't make him a knight or a baronet or a lord or something. Look at his breast; why, he is just clothed in domestic and foreign decorations. Well, sir, every one of them is the record of some shouting stupidity or other; and taken together, they are proof that the very best thing in all this world that can befall a man is to be born lucky. I say again, as I said at the banquet, Scoresby's an absolute fool.

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY.

THERE was a good deal of pleasant gossip about old Captain "Hurricane" Jones, of the Pacific Ocean,—peace to his ashes! Two or three of us present had known him; I, particularly well, for I had made four sea-voyages with him. He was a very remarkable man. He was born on a ship; he picked up what little education he had among his shipmates; he began life in the forecastle, and climbed grade by grade to the captaincy. More than fifty years of his sixty-five were spent at sea. He had sailed all oceans, seen all lands, and borrowed a tint from all climates. When a man has been fifty years at sea, he necessarily knows nothing of men, nothing of the world but its surface, nothing of the world's thought, nothing of the world's learning but its A B C, and that blurred and distorted by the unfocussed lenses of an untrained mind. Such a man is

only a gray and bearded child. That is what old Hurricane Jones was,—simply an innocent, lovable old infant. When his spirit was in repose he was as sweet and gentle as a girl; when his wrath was up he was a hurricane that made his nickname seem tamely descriptive. He was formidable in a fight, for he was of powerful build and dauntless courage. He was frescoed from head to heel with pictures and mottoes tattooed in red and blue India ink. I was with him one voyage when he got his last vacant space tattooed; this vacant space was around his left ankle. During three days he stumped about the ship with his ankle bare and swollen, and this legend gleaming red and angry out from a clouding of India ink: "Virtue is its own R'd." (There was a lack of room.) He was deeply and sincerely pious, and swore like a fish-woman. He considered swearing blameless, because sailors would not understand an order unillumined by it. He was a profound Biblical scholar,—that is, he thought he was. He believed everything in the Bible, but he had his own methods of arriving at his

beliefs. He was of the "advanced" school of thinkers, and applied natural laws to the interpretation of all miracles, somewhat on the plan of the people who make the six days of creation six geological epochs, and so forth. Without being aware of it, he was a rather severe satire on modern scientific religionists. Such a man as I have been describing is rabidly fond of disquisition and argument; one knows that without being told it.

One trip the captain had a clergyman on board, but did not know he was a clergyman, since the passenger list did not betray the fact. He took a great liking to this Rev. Mr. Peters, and talked with him a great deal: told him yarns, gave him toothsome scraps of personal history, and wove a glittering streak of profanity through his garrulous fabric that was refreshing to a spirit weary of the dull neutralities of undecorated speech. One day the captain said, "Peters, do you ever read the Bible?"

"Well—yes."

"I judge it ain't often, by the way you say

it. Now, you tackle it in dead earnest once, and you'll find it'll pay. Don't you get discouraged, but hang right on. First, you won't understand it; but by and by things will begin to clear up, and then you wouldn't lay it down to eat."

"Yes, I have heard that said."

"And it's so, too. There ain't a book that begins with it. It lays over 'em all, Peters. There's some pretty tough things in it,—there ain't any getting around that,—but you stick to them and think them out, and when once you get on the inside everything's plain as day."

"The miracles, too, captain?"

"Yes, sir! the miracles, too. Every one of them. Now, there's that business with the prophets of Baal; like enough that stumped you?"

"Well, I don't know but—"

"Own up, now; it stumped you. Well, I don't wonder. You hadn't had any experience in ravelling such things out, and naturally it was too many for you. Would you like to

have me explain that thing to you, and show you how to get at the meat of these matters?"

"Indeed, I would, captain, if you don't mind."

Then the captain proceeded as follows: "I'll do it with pleasure. First, you see, I read and read, and thought and thought, till I got to understand what sort of people they were in the old Bible times, and then after that it was clear and easy. Now, this was the way I put it up, concerning Isaac * and the prophets of Baal. There was some mighty sharp men amongst the public characters of that old ancient day, and Isaac was one of them. Isaac had his failings,—plenty of them, too; it ain't for me to apologize for Isaac; he played on the prophets of Baal, and like enough he was justifiable, considering the odds that was against him. No, all I say is, 't wa' n't any miracle, and that I'll show you so's 't you can see it yourself.

"Well, times had been getting rougher and rougher for prophets, — that is, prophets of Isaac's denomination. There were four hun-

* This is the captain's own mistake.

dred and fifty prophets of Baal in the community, and only one Presbyterian; that is, if Isaac *was* a Presbyterian, which I reckon he was, but it don't say. Naturally, the prophets of Baal took all the trade. Isaac was pretty low-spirited, I reckon, but he was a good deal of a man, and no doubt he went a-prophesying around, letting on to be doing a land-office business, but 't wa' n't any use; he couldn't run any opposition to amount to anything. By and by things got desperate with him; he sets his head to work and thinks it all out, and then what does he do? Why, he begins to throw out hints that the other parties are this and that and t'other,—nothing very definite, may be, but just kind of undermining their reputation in a quiet way. This made talk, of course, and finally got to the king. The king asked Isaac what he meant by his talk. Says Isaac, 'Oh, nothing particular; only, can they pray down fire from heaven on an altar? It ain't much, maybe, your majesty, only can they *do* it? That's the idea.' So the king was a good deal disturbed, and he went to the prophets of

Baal, and they said, pretty airy, that if he had an altar ready, *they* were ready; and they intimated he better get it insured, too.

"So next morning all the children of Israel and their parents and the other people gathered themselves together. Well, here was that great crowd of prophets of Baal packed together on one side, and Isaac walking up and down all alone on the other, putting up his job. When time was called, Isaac let on to be comfortable and indifferent; told the other team to take the first innings. So they went at it, the whole four hundred and fifty, praying around the altar, very hopeful, and doing their level best. They prayed an hour,—two hours,—three hours,—and so on, plumb till noon. It wa' n't any use; they had n't took a trick. Of course they felt kind of ashamed before all those people, and well they might. Now, what would a magnanimous man do? Keep still, wouldn't he? Of course. What did Isaac do? He gravelled the prophets of Baal every way he could think of. Says he, 'You don't speak up loud enough; your god's

asleep, like enough, or may be he's taking a walk; you want to holler, you know,'—or words to that effect; I don't recollect the exact language. Mind, I don't apologize for Isaac; he had his faults.

"Well, the prophets of Baal prayed along the best they knew how all the afternoon, and never raised a spark. At last, about sundown, they were all tuckered out, and they owned up and quit.

"What does Isaac do, now? He steps up and says to some friends of his, there, 'Pour four barrels of water on the altar!' Everybody was astonished; for the other side had prayed at it dry, you know, and got whitewashed. They poured it on. Says he, 'Heave on four more barrels.' Then he says, 'Heave on four more.' Twelve barrels, you see, altogether. The water ran all over the altar, and all down the sides, and filled up a trench around it that would hold a couple of hogsheads,—'measures,' it says; I reckon it means about a hogshead. Some of the people were going to put on their things and go, for they

allowed he was crazy. They didn't know Isaac. Isaac knelt down and began to pray: he strung along, and strung along, about the heathen in distant lands, and about the sister churches, and about the state and the country at large, and about those that's in authority in the government, and all the usual programme, you know, till everybody had got tired and gone to thinking about something else, and then, all of a sudden, when nobody was noticing, he outs with a match and rakes it on the under side of his leg, and pff! up the whole thing blazes like a house afire! Twelve barrels of *water? Petroleum*, sir, PETROLEUM! that's what it was!"

"Petroleum, captain?"

"Yes, sir; the country was full of it. Isaac knew all about that. You read the Bible. Don't you worry about the tough places. They ain't tough when you come to think them out and throw light on them. There ain't a thing in the Bible but what is true; all you want is to go prayerfully to work and cipher out how 't was done."

A CURIOUS EXPERIENCE.

THIS is the story which the Major told me, as nearly as I can recall it:—

In the winter of 1862–3, I was commandant of Fort Trumbull, at New London, Conn. Maybe our life there was not so brisk as life at "the front"; still it was brisk enough, in its way—one's brains did n't cake together there for lack of something to keep them stirring. For one thing, all the Northern atmosphere at that time was thick with mysterious rumors—rumors to the effect that rebel spies were flitting everywhere, and getting ready to blow up our Northern forts, burn our hotels, send infected clothing into our towns, and all that sort of thing. You remember it. All this had a tendency to keep us awake, and knock the traditional dulness out of garrison life. Besides, ours was a recruiting station—which is the same as saying we had n't any time to

waste in dozing, or dreaming, or fooling around. Why, with all our watchfulness, fifty per cent. of a day's recruits would leak out of our hands and give us the slip the same night. The bounties were so prodigious that a recruit could pay a sentinel three or four hundred dollars to let him escape, and still have enough of his bounty-money left to constitute a fortune for a poor man. Yes, as I said before, our life was not drowsy.

Well, one day I was in my quarters alone, doing some writing, when a pale and ragged lad of fourteen or fifteen entered, made a neat bow, and said,—

"I believe recruits are received here?"

"Yes."

"Will you please enlist me, sir?"

"Dear me, no! You are too young, my boy, and too small."

A disappointed look came into his face, and quickly deepened into an expression of despondency. He turned slowly away, as if to go; hesitated, then faced me again, and said, in a tone which went to my heart,—

"I have no home, and not a friend in the world. If you *could* only enlist me!"

But of course the thing was out of the question, and I said so as gently as I could. Then I told him to sit down by the stove and warm himself, and added,—

"You shall have something to eat, presently. You are hungry?"

He did not answer; he did not need to; the gratitude in his big soft eyes was more eloquent than any words could have been. He sat down by the stove, and I went on writing. Occasionally I took a furtive glance at him. I noticed that his clothes and shoes, although soiled and damaged, were of good style and material. This fact was suggestive. To it I added the facts that his voice was low and musical; his eyes deep and melancholy; his carriage and address gentlemanly; evidently the poor chap was in trouble. As a result, I was interested.

However, I became absorbed in my work, by and by, and forgot all about the boy. I don't know how long this lasted; but, at length,

I happened to look up. The boy's back was toward me, but his face was turned in such a way that I could see one of his cheeks—and down that cheek a rill of noiseless tears was flowing.

"God bless my soul!" I said to myself; "I forgot the poor rat was starving." Then I made amends for my brutality by saying to him, "Come along, my lad; you shall dine with *me;* I am alone to-day."

He gave me another of those grateful looks, and a happy light broke in his face. At the table he stood with his hand on his chair-back until I was seated, then seated himself. I took up my knife and fork and—well, I simply held them, and kept still; for the boy had inclined his head and was saying a silent grace. A thousand hallowed memories of home and my childhood poured in upon me, and I sighed to think how far I had drifted from religion and its balm for hurt minds, its comfort and solace and support.

As our meal progressed, I observed that young Wicklow—Robert Wicklow was his full

name—knew what to do with his napkin; and —well, in a word, I observed that he was a boy of good breeding; never mind the details. He had a simple frankness, too, which won upon me. We talked mainly about himself, and I had no difficulty in getting his history out of him. When he spoke of his having been born and reared in Louisiana, I warmed to him decidedly, for I had spent some time down there. I knew all the "coast" region of the Mississippi, and loved it, and had not been long enough away from it for my interest in it to begin to pale. The very names that fell from his lips sounded good to me,—so good that I steered the talk in directions that would bring them out. Baton Rouge, Plaquemine, Donaldsonville, Sixty-mile Point, Bonnet-Carre, the Stock-Landing, Carrollton, the Steamship Landing, the Steamboat Landing, New Orleans, Tchoupitoulas Street, the Esplanade, the Rue des Bons Enfants, the St. Charles Hotel, the Tivoli Circle, the Shell Road, Lake Pontchartrain; and it was particularly delightful to me to hear once more of the

"R. E. Lee,' the "Natchez," the "Eclipse," the "General Quitman," the "Duncan F. Kenner," and other old familiar steamboats. It was almost as good as being back there, these names so vividly reproduced in my mind the look of the things they stood for. Briefly, this was little Wicklow's history:—

When the war broke out, he and his invalid aunt and his father were living near Baton Rouge, on a great and rich plantation which had been in the family for fifty years. The father was a Union man. He was persecuted in all sorts of ways, but clung to his principles. At last, one night, masked men burned his mansion down, and the family had to fly for their lives. They were hunted from place to place, and learned all there was to know about poverty, hunger, and distress. The invalid aunt found relief at last: misery and exposure killed her; she died in an open field, like a tramp, the rain beating upon her and the thunder booming overhead. Not long afterward, the father was captured by an armed band; and while the son begged and pleaded, the

victim was strung up before his face. [At this point a baleful light shone in the youth's eyes, and he said, with the manner of one who talks to himself: "If I cannot be enlisted, no matter —I shall find a way—I shall find a way."] As soon as the father was pronounced dead, the son was told that if he was not out of that region within twenty-four hours, it would go hard with him. That night he crept to the riverside and hid himself near a plantation landing. By and by the "Duncan F. Kenner," stopped there, and he swam out and concealed himself in the yawl that was dragging at her stern. Before daylight the boat reached the Stock-Landing, and he slipped ashore. He walked the three miles which lay between that point and the house of an uncle of his in Good-Children Street, in New Orleans, and then his troubles were over for the time being. But this uncle was a Union man, too, and before very long he concluded that he had better leave the South. So he and young Wicklow slipped out of the country on board a sailing vessel, and in due time reached New York.

They put up at the Astor House. Young Wicklow had a good time of it for a while, strolling up and down Broadway, and observing the strange Northern sights; but in the end a change came,—and not for the better. The uncle had been cheerful at first, but now he began to look troubled and despondent; moreover, he became moody and irritable; talked of money giving out, and no way to get more, —"not enough left for one, let alone two." Then, one morning, he was missing—did not come to breakfast. The boy inquired at the office, and was told that the uncle had paid his bill the night before and gone away—to Boston, the clerk believed, but was not certain.

The lad was alone and friendless. He did not know what to do, but concluded he had better try to follow and find his uncle. He went down to the steamboat landing; learned that the trifle of money in his pocket would not carry him to Boston; however, it would carry him to New London; so he took passage for that port, resolving to trust to Providence to furnish him means to travel the rest of the way.

He had now been wandering about the streets of New London three days and nights, getting a bite and a nap here and there for charity's sake. But he had given up at last; courage and hope were both gone. If he could enlist, nobody could be more thankful; if he could not get in as a soldier, couldn't he be a drummer-boy? Ah, he would work *so* hard to please, and would be so grateful!

Well, there's the history of young Wicklow, just as he told it to me, barring details. I said,—

"My boy, you are among friends, now,—don't you be troubled any more." How his eyes glistened! I called in Sergeant John Rayburn,—he was from Hartford; lives in Hartford yet; maybe you know him,—and said, "Rayburn, quarter this boy with the musicians. I am going to enroll him as a drummer-boy, and I want you to look after him and see that he is well treated."

Well, of course, intercourse between the commandant of the post and the drummer-boy came to an end, now; but the poor little

friendless chap lay heavy on my heart, just the same. I kept on the lookout, hoping to see him brighten up and begin to be cheery and gay; but no, the days went by, and there was no change. He associated with nobody; he was always absent-minded, always thinking; his face was always sad. One morning Rayburn asked leave to speak to me privately. Said he,—

"I hope I don't offend, sir; but the truth is, the musicians are in such a sweat it seems as if somebody's *got* to speak."

"Why, what is the trouble?"

"It's the Wicklow boy, sir. The musicians are down on him to an extent you can't imagine."

"Well, go on, go on. What has he been doing?"

"Prayin', sir."

"Praying!"

"Yes, sir; the musicians haven't any peace of their life for that boy's prayin'. First thing in the morning he's at it; noons he's at it; and nights—well, *nights* he just lays into 'em like

all possessed! Sleep? Bless you, they *can't* sleep: he's got the floor, as the sayin' is, and then when he once gets his supplication-mill agoin', there just simply ain't any let-up *to* him. He starts in with the band-master, and he prays for him; next he takes the head bugler, and he prays for him; next the bass drum, and he scoops *him* in; and so on, right straight through the band, givin' them all a show, and takin' that amount of interest in it which would make you think he thought he warn't but a little while for this world, and believed he couldn't be happy in heaven without he had a brass band along, and wanted to pick 'em out for himself, so he could depend on 'em to do up the national tunes in a style suitin' to the place. Well, sir, heavin' boots at him don't have no effect; it's dark in there; and, besides, he don't pray fair, anyway, but kneels down behind the big drum; so it don't make no difference if they *rain* boots at him, *he* don't give a dern—warbles right along, same as if it was applause. They sing out, 'Oh, dry up!' 'Give us a rest!' 'Shoot him!' 'Oh, take a walk!'

and all sorts of such things. But what of it? It don't phaze him. *He* don't mind it." After a pause: "Kind of a good little fool, too; gits up in the mornin' and carts all that stock of boots back, and sorts 'em out and sets each man's pair where they belong. And they've been throwed at him so much now, that he knows every boot in the band,—can sort 'em out with his eyes shut."

After another pause, which I forebore to interrupt,—

"But the roughest thing about it is, that when he's done prayin',—when he ever *does* get done,—he pipes up and begins to *sing*. Well, you know what a honey kind of a voice he's got when he talks; you know how it would persuade a cast-iron dog to come down off of a doorstep and lick his hand. Now if you'll take my word for it, sir, it ain't a circumstance to his singin'! Flute music is harsh to that boy's singin'. Oh, he just gurgles it out so soft and sweet and low, there in the dark, that it makes you think you are in heaven."

"What is there 'rough' about that?"

"Ah, that's just it, sir. You hear him sing

"'Just as I am—poor, wretched, blind,'

—just you hear him sing that, once, and see if you don't melt all up and the water come into your eyes! I don't care *what* he sings, it goes plum straight home to you—it goes deep down to where you *live*—and it fetches you every time! Just you hear him sing:—

"'Child of sin and sorrow, filled with dismay,
Wait not till to-morrow, yield thee to-day;
Grieve not that love
Which, from above'—

and so on. It makes a body feel like the wickedest, ungratefulest brute that walks. And when he sings them songs of his about home, and mother, and childhood, and old memories, and things that's vanished, and old friends dead and gone, it fetches everything before your face that you've ever loved and lost in all your life—and it's just beautiful, it's just divine to listen to, sir—but, Lord, Lord, the heart-break of it! The band—well, they all cry—every rascal of them blubbers, and

don't try to hide it, either; and first you know, that very gang that's been slammin' boots at that boy will skip out of their bunks all of a sudden, and rush over in the dark and hug him! Yes, they do—and slobber all over him, and call him pet names, and beg him to forgive them. And just at that time, if a regiment was to offer to hurt a hair of that cub's head, they'd go for that regiment, if it was a whole army corps!"

Another pause.

"Is that all?" said I.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, dear me, what is the complaint? What do they want done?"

"Done? Why, bless you, sir, they want you to stop him from *singin'*."

"What an idea! You said his music was divine."

"That's just it. It's *too* divine. Mortal man can't stand it. It stirs a body up so; it turns a body inside out; it racks his feelin's all to rags; it makes him feel bad and wicked, and not fit for any place but perdition. It keeps a

body in such an everlastin' state of repentin', that nothin' don't taste good and there ain't no comfort in life. And then the *cryin'*, you see —every mornin' they are ashamed to look one another in the face."

"Well, this is an odd case, and a singular complaint. So they really want the singing stopped ?"

"Yes, sir, that is the idea. They don't wish to ask too much; they would like powerful well to have the prayin' shut down on, or leastways trimmed off around the edges; but the main thing's the singin'. If they can only get the singin' choked off, they think they can stand the prayin', rough as it is to be bully-ragged so much that way."

I told the sergeant I would take the matter under consideration. That night I crept into the musicians' quarters and listened. The sergeant had not overstated the case. I heard the praying voice pleading in the dark; I heard the execrations of the harassed men; I heard the rain of boots whiz through the air, and bang and thump around the big drum.

The thing touched me, but it amused me, too. By and by, after an impressive silence, came the singing. Lord, the pathos of it, the enchantment of it! Nothing in the world was ever so sweet, so gracious, so tender, so holy, so moving. I made my stay very brief; I was beginning to experience emotions of a sort not proper to the commandant of a fortress.

Next day I issued orders which stopped the praying and singing. Then followed three or four days which were so full of bounty-jumping excitements and irritations that I never once thought of my drummer-boy. But now comes Sergeant Rayburn, one morning, and says,—

"That new boy acts mighty strange, sir."

"How?"

"Well, sir, he's all the time writing."

"Writing? What does he write—letters?"

"I don't know, sir; but whenever he's off duty, he is always poking and nosing around the fort, all by himself,—blest if I think there's a hole or corner in it he hasn't been into,—and every little while he outs with pencil and paper and scribbles something down."

This gave me a most unpleasant sensation. I wanted to scoff at it, but it was not a time to scoff at *anything* that had the least suspicious tinge about it. Things were happening all around us, in the North, then, that warned us to be always on the alert, and always suspecting. I recalled to mind the suggestive fact that this boy was from the South,—the extreme South, Louisiana,—and the thought was not of a reassuring nature, under the circumstances. Nevertheless, it cost me a pang to give the orders which I now gave to Rayburn. I felt like a father who plots to expose his own child to shame and injury. I told Rayburn to keep quiet, bide his time, and get me some of those writings whenever he could manage it without the boy's finding it out. And I charged him not to do anything which might let the boy discover that he was being watched. I also ordered that he allow the lad his usual liberties, but that he be followed at a distance when he went out into the town.

During the next two days, Rayburn reported to me several times. No success. The

boy was still writing, but he always pocketed his paper with a careless air whenever Rayburn appeared in his vicinity. He had gone twice to an old deserted stable in the town, remained a minute or two, and come out again. One could not pooh-pooh these things —they had an evil look. I was obliged to confess to myself that I was getting uneasy. I went into my private quarters and sent for my second in command—an officer of intelligence and judgment, son of General James Watson Webb. He was surprised and troubled. We had a long talk over the matter, and came to the conclusion that it would be worth while to institute a secret search. I determined to take charge of that myself. So I had myself called at two in the morning; and, pretty soon after, I was in the musicians' quarters, crawling along the floor on my stomach among the snorers. I reached my slumbering waif's bunk at last, without disturbing anybody, captured his clothes and kit, and crawled stealthily back again. When I got to my own quarters, I found Webb there, waiting and

eager to know the result. We made search immediately. The clothes were a disappointment. In the pockets we found blank paper and a pencil; nothing else, except a jack-knife and such queer odds and ends and useless trifles as boys hoard and value. We turned to the kit hopefully. Nothing there but a rebuke for us!—a little Bible with this written on the fly-leaf: "Stranger, be kind to my boy, for his mother's sake."

I looked at Webb—he dropped his eyes; he looked at me—I dropped mine. Neither spoke. I put the book reverently back in its place. Presently Webb got up and went away, without remark. After a little I nerved myself up to my unpalatable job, and took the plunder back to where it belonged, crawling on my stomach as before. It seemed the peculiarly appropriate attitude for the business I was in.

I was most honestly glad when it was over and done with.

About noon next day Rayburn came, as usual, to report. I cut him short. I said,—

"Let this nonsense be dropped. We are making a bugaboo out of a poor little cub who has got no more harm in him than a hymn-book."

The sergeant looked surprised, and said,—

"Well, you know it was your orders, sir, and I've got some of the writing."

"And what does it amount to? How did you get it?"

"I peeped through the key-hole, and see him writing. So when I judged he was about done, I made a sort of a little cough, and I see him crumple it up and throw it in the fire, and look all around to see if anybody was coming. Then he settled back as comfortable and careless as anything. Then I comes in, and passes the time of day pleasantly, and sends him of an errand. He never looked uneasy, but went right along. It was a coal-fire and new-built; the writing had gone over behind a chunk, out of sight; but I got it out; there it is; it ain't hardly scorched, you see."

I glanced at the paper and took in a sentence or two. Then I dismissed the sergeant and

told him to send Webb to me. Here is the paper in full :—

"FORT TRUMBULL, the 8th.

"COLONEL,—I was mistaken as to the calibre of the three guns I ended my list with. They are 18-pounders; all the rest of the armament is as I stated. The garrison remains as before reported, except that the two light infantry companies that were to be detached for service at the front are to stay here for the present —can't find out for how long, just now, but will soon. We are satisfied that, all things considered, matters had better be postponed un—"

There it broke off—there is where Rayburn coughed and interrupted the writer. All my affection for the boy, all my respect for him and charity for his forlorn condition, withered in a moment under the blight of this revelation of cold-blooded baseness.

But never mind about that. Here was business,—business that required profound and immediate attention, too. Webb and I turned the subject over and over, and examined it all around. Webb said,—

"What a pity he was interrupted! Something is going to be postponed until—when? And what *is* the something? Possibly he

would have mentioned it, the pious little reptile!"

"Yes," I said, "we have missed a trick. And who is '*we*,' in the letter? Is it conspirators inside the fort or outside?"

That "we" was uncomfortably suggestive. However, it was not worth while to be guessing around that, so we proceeded to matters more practical. In the first place, we decided to double the sentries and keep the strictest possible watch. Next, we thought of calling Wicklow in and making him divulge everything; but that did not seem wisest until other methods should fail. We must have some more of the writings; so we began to plan to that end. And now we had an idea: Wicklow never went to the post-office,—perhaps the deserted stable was his post-office. We sent for my confidential clerk—a young German named Sterne, who was a sort of natural detective—and told him all about the case and ordered him to go to work on it. Within the hour we got word that Wicklow was writing again. Shortly afterward, word came that he had

asked leave to go out into the town. He was detained awhile, and meantime Sterne hurried off and concealed himself in the stable. By and by he saw Wicklow saunter in, look about him, then hide something under some rubbish in a corner, and take leisurely leave again. Sterne pounced upon the hidden article—a letter—and brought it to us. It had no superscription and no signature. It repeated what we had already read, and then went on to say :—

"We think it best to postpone till the two companies are gone. I mean the four inside think so; have not communicated with the others—afraid of attracting attention. I say four because we have lost two; they had hardly enlisted and got inside when they were shipped off to the front. It will be absolutely necessary to have two in their places. The two that went were the brothers from Thirty-mile Point. I have something of the greatest importance to reveal, but must not trust it to this method of communication; will try the other."

"The little scoundrel!" said Webb; "who *could* have supposed he was a spy? However, never mind about that; let us add up our particulars, such as they are, and see how the case stands to date. First, we've got a rebel spy in

our midst, whom we know; secondly, we've got three more in our midst whom we don't know; thirdly, these spies have been introduced among us through the simple and easy process of enlisting as soldiers in the Union army—and evidently two of them have got sold at it, and been shipped off to the front; fourthly, there are assistant spies 'outside'—number indefinite; fifthly, Wicklow has very important matter which he is afraid to communicate by the 'present method'—will 'try the other.' That is the case, as it now stands. Shall we collar Wicklow and make him confess? Or shall we catch the person who removes the letters from the stable and make *him* tell? Or shall we keep still and find out more?"

We decided upon the last course. We judged that we did not need to proceed to summary measures now, since it was evident that the conspirators were likely to wait till those two light infantry companies were out of the way. We fortified Sterne with pretty ample powers, and told him to use his best en-

deavors to find out Wicklow's "other method" of communication. We meant to play a bold game; and to this end we proposed to keep the spies in an unsuspecting state as long as possible. So we ordered Sterne to return to the stable immediately, and, if he found the coast clear, to conceal Wicklow's letter where it was before, and leave it there for the conspirators to get.

The night closed down without further event. It was cold and dark and sleety, with a raw wind blowing; still I turned out of my warm bed several times during the night, and went the rounds in person, to see that all was right and that every sentry was on the alert. I always found them wide awake and watchful; evidently whispers of mysterious dangers had been floating about, and the doubling of the guards had been a kind of indorsement of those rumors. Once, toward morning, I encountered Webb, breasting his way against the bitter wind, and learned then that he, also, had been the rounds several times to see that all was going right.

Next day's events hurried things up somewhat. Wicklow wrote another letter; Sterne preceded him to the stable and saw him deposit it; captured it as soon as Wicklow was out of the way, then slipped out and followed the little spy at a distance, with a detective in plain clothes at his own heels, for we thought it judicious to have the law's assistance handy in case of need. Wicklow went to the railway station, and waited around till the train from New York came in, then stood scanning the faces of the crowd as they poured out of the cars. Presently an aged gentleman, with green goggles and a cane, came limping along, stopped in Wicklow's neighborhood, and began to look about him expectantly. In an instant Wicklow darted forward, thrust an envelope into his hand, then glided away and disappeared in the throng. The next instant Sterne had snatched the letter; and as he hurried past the detective, he said: "Follow the old gentleman—don't lose sight of him." Then Sterne skurried out with the crowd, and came straight to the fort.

We sat with closed doors, and instructed the guard outside to allow no interruption.

First we opened the letter captured at the stable. It read as follows:—

"HOLY ALLIANCE,—Found, in the usual gun, commands from the Master, left there last night, which set aside the instructions heretofore received from the subordinate quarter. Have left in the gun the usual indication that the commands reached the proper hand—"

Webb, interrupting: "Is n't the boy under constant surveillance now?"

I said yes; he had been under strict surveillance ever since the capturing of his former letter.

"Then how could he put anything into a gun, or take anything out of it, and not get caught?"

"Well," I said, "I don't like the look of that very well."

"I don't, either," said Webb. "It simply means that there are conspirators among the very sentinels. Without their connivance in some way or other, the thing could n't have been done."

I sent for Rayburn, and ordered him to examine the batteries and see what he could find. The reading of the letter was then resumed:—

"The new commands are peremptory, and require that the MMMM shall be FFFFF at 3 o'clock to-morrow morning. Two hundred will arrive, in small parties, by train and otherwise, from various directions, and will be at appointed place at right time. I will distribute the sign to-day. Success is apparently sure, though something must have got out, for the sentries have been doubled, and the chiefs went the rounds last night several times. W. W. comes from southerly to-day and will receive secret orders—by the other method. All six of you must be in 166 at sharp 2 A. M. You will find B. B. there, who will give you detailed instructions. Password same as last time, only reversed—put first syllable last and last syllable first. REMEMBER XXXX. Do not forget. Be of good heart; before the next sun rises you will be heroes; your fame will be permanent; you will have added a deathless page to history. Amen."

"Thunder and Mars," said Webb, "but we are getting into mighty hot quarters, as I look at it!"

I said there was no question but that things were beginning to wear a most serious aspect. Said I,—

"A desperate enterprise is on foot, that is plain enough. To-night is the time set for it, —that, also, is plain. The exact nature of the enterprise—I mean the manner of it—is hidden away under those blind bunches of M's and F's, but the end and aim, I judge, is the surprise and capture of the post. We must move quick and sharp now. I think nothing can be gained by continuing our clandestine policy as regards Wicklow. We *must* know, and as soon as possible, too, where '166' is located, so that we can make a descent upon the gang there at 2 A. M.; and doubtless the quickest way to get that information will be to force it out of that boy. But first of all, and before we make any important move, I must lay the facts before the War Department, and ask for plenary powers."

The despatch was prepared in cipher to go over the wires; I read it, approved it, and sent it along.

We presently finished discussing the letter which was under consideration, and then opened the one which had been snatched from

the lame gentleman. It contained nothing but a couple of perfectly blank sheets of note-paper! It was a chilly check to our hot eagerness and expectancy. We felt as blank as the paper, for a moment, and twice as foolish. But it was for a moment only; for, of course, we immediately afterward thought of "sympathetic ink." We held the paper close to the fire and watched for the characters to come out, under the influence of the heat; but nothing appeared but some faint tracings, which we could make nothing of. We then called in the surgeon, and sent him off with orders to apply every test he was acquainted with till he got the right one, and report the contents of the letter to me the instant he brought them to the surface. This check was a confounded annoyance, and we naturally chafed under the delay; for we had fully expected to get out of that letter some of the most important secrets of the plot.

Now appeared Sergeant Rayburn, and drew from his pocket a piece of twine string about a foot long, with three knots tied in it, and held it up.

"I got it out of a gun on the water-front," said he. "I took the tompions out of all the guns and examined close; this string was the only thing that was in any gun."

So this bit of string was Wicklow's "sign" to signify that the "Master's" commands had not miscarried. I ordered that every sentinel who had served near that gun during the past twenty-four hours be put in confinement at once and separately, and not allowed to communicate with any one without my privity and consent.

A telegram now came from the Secretary of War. It read as follows :—

"Suspend *habeas corpus*. Put town under martial law. Make necessary arrests. Act with vigor and promptness. Keep the Department informed."

We were now in shape to go to work. I sent out and had the lame gentleman quietly arrested and as quietly brought into the fort; I placed him under guard, and forbade speech to him or from him. He was inclined to bluster at first, but he soon dropped that.

Next came word that Wicklow had been seen to give something to a couple of our new

recruits; and that, as soon as his back was turned, these had been seized and confined. Upon each was found a small bit of paper, bearing these words and signs in pencil :—

EAGLE'S THIRD FLIGHT.

REMEMBER XXXX.

166.

In accordance with instructions, I telegraphed to the Department, in cipher, the progress made, and also described the above ticket. We seemed to be in a strong enough position now to venture to throw off the mask as regarded Wicklow ; so I sent for him. I also sent for and received back the letter written in sympathetic ink, the surgeon accompanying it with the information that thus far it had resisted his tests, but that there were others he could apply when I should be ready for him to do so.

Presently Wicklow entered. He had a

somewhat worn and anxious look, but he was composed and easy, and if he suspected anything it did not appear in his face or manner. I allowed him to stand there a moment or two, then I said pleasantly,—

"My boy, why do you go to that old stable so much?"

He answered, with simple demeanor and without embarrassment,—

"Well, I hardly know, sir; there isn't any particular reason, except that I like to be alone, and I amuse myself there."

"You amuse yourself there, do you?"

"Yes, sir," he replied, as innocently and simply as before.

"Is that all you do there?"

"Yes, sir," he said, looking up with childlike wonderment in his big soft eyes.

"You are *sure?*"

"Yes, sir, sure."

After a pause, I said,—

"Wicklow, why do you write so much?"

"I? I do not write much, sir."

"You don't?"

"No, sir. Oh, if you mean scribbling, I *do* scribble some, for amusement."

"What do you do with your scribblings?"

"Nothing, sir—throw them away."

"Never send them to anybody?"

"No, sir."

I suddenly thrust before him the letter to the "Colonel." He started slightly, but immediately composed himself. A slight tinge spread itself over his cheek.

"How came you to send *this* piece of scribbling, then?"

"I nev—never meant any harm, sir."

"Never meant any harm! You betray the armament and condition of the post, and mean no harm by it?"

He hung his head and was silent.

"Come, speak up, and stop lying. Whom was this letter intended for?"

He showed signs of distress, now; but quickly collected himself, and replied, in a tone of deep earnestness,—

"I will tell you the truth, sir—the whole truth. The letter was never intended for any-

body at all. I wrote it only to amuse myself. I see the error and foolishness of it, now,—but it is the only offence, sir, upon my honor."

"Ah, I am glad of that. It is dangerous to be writing such letters. I hope you are sure this is the only one you wrote?"

"Yes, sir, perfectly sure."

His hardihood was stupefying. He told that lie with as sincere a countenance as any creature ever wore. I waited a moment to soothe down my rising temper, and then said,—

"Wicklow, jog your memory now, and see if you can help me with two or three little matters which I wish to inquire about."

"I will do my very best, sir."

"Then, to begin with—who is 'the Master'?"

It betrayed him into darting a startled glance at our faces, but that was all. He was serene again in a moment, and tranquilly answered,—

"I do not know, sir."

"You do not know?"

"I do not know."

"You are *sure* you do not know?"

He tried hard to keep his eyes on mine, but the strain was too great; his chin sunk slowly toward his breast and he was silent; he stood there nervously fumbling with a button, an object to command one's pity, in spite of his base acts. Presently I broke the stillness with the question,—

"Who are the 'Holy Alliance'?"

His body shook visibly, and he made a slight random gesture with his hands, which to me was like the appeal of a despairing creature for compassion. But he made no sound. He continued to stand with his face bent toward the ground. As we sat gazing at him, waiting for him to speak, we saw the big tears begin to roll down his cheeks. But he remained silent. After a little, I said,—

"You must answer me, my boy, and you must tell me the truth. Who are the Holy Alliance?"

He wept on in silence. Presently I said, somewhat sharply,—

"Answer the question!"

He struggled to get command of his voice; and then, looking up appealingly, forced the words out between his sobs,—

"Oh, have pity on me, sir! I cannot answer it, for I do not know."

"What!"

"Indeed, sir, I am telling the truth. I never have heard of the Holy Alliance till this moment. On my honor, sir, this is so."

"Good heavens! Look at this second letter of yours; there, do you see those words, '*Holy Alliance?*' What do you say now?"

He gazed up into my face with the hurt look of one upon whom a great wrong had been wrought, then said, feelingly,—

"This is some cruel joke, sir; and how could they play it upon me, who have tried all I could to do right, and have never done harm to anybody? Some one has counterfeited my hand; I never wrote a line of this; I have never seen this letter before!"

"Oh, you unspeakable liar! Here, what do you say to *this?*"—and I snatched the sympa-

thetic-ink letter from my pocket and thrust it before his eyes.

His face turned white !—as white as a dead person's. He wavered slightly in his tracks, and put his hand against the wall to steady himself. After a moment he asked, in so faint a voice that it was hardly audible,—

"Have you—read it ?"

Our faces must have answered the truth before my lips could get out a false "yes," for I distinctly saw the courage come back into that boy's eyes. I waited for him to say something, but he kept silent. So at last I said,—

"Well, what have you to say as to the revelations in this letter ?"

He answered, with perfect composure,—

"Nothing, except that they are entirely harmless and innocent; they can hurt nobody."

I was in something of a corner now, as I couldn't disprove his assertion. I did not know exactly how to proceed. However, an idea came to my relief, and I said,—

"You are sure you know nothing about the

Master and the Holy Alliance, and did not write the letter which you say is a forgery ?"

"Yes, sir—sure."

I slowly drew out the knotted twine string and held it up without speaking. He gazed at it indifferently, then looked at me inquiringly. My patience was sorely taxed. However, I kept my temper down, and said in my usual voice,—

"Wicklow, do you see this ?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is it ?"

"It seems to be a piece of string."

"*Seems ?* It *is* a piece of string. Do you recognize it ?"

"No, sir," he replied, as calmly as the words could be uttered.

His coolness was perfectly wonderful ! I paused now for several seconds, in order that the silence might add impressiveness to what I was about to say ; then I rose and laid my hand on his shoulder, and said gravely,—

"It will do you no good, poor boy, none in the world. This sign to the 'Master,' this

knotted string, found in one of the guns on the water-front—"

"Found *in* the gun! Oh, no, no, no! do not say *in* the gun, but in a crack in the tompion! —it *must* have been in the crack!" and down he went on his knees and clasped his hands and lifted up a face that was pitiful to see, so ashy it was, and wild with terror.

"No, it was *in* the gun."

"Oh, something has gone wrong! My God, I am lost!" and he sprang up and darted this way and that, dodging the hands that were put out to catch him, and doing his best to escape from the place. But of course escape was impossible. Then he flung himself on his knees again, crying with all his might, and clasped me around the legs; and so he clung to me and begged and pleaded, saying, "Oh, have pity on me! Oh, be merciful to me! Do not betray me; they would not spare my life a moment! Protect me, save me. I will confess everything!"

It took us some time to quiet him down and modify his fright, and get him into some-

thing like a rational frame of mind. Then I began to question him, he answering humbly, with downcast eyes, and from time to time swabbing away his constantly flowing tears.

"So you are at heart a rebel?"

"Yes, sir."

"And a spy?"

"Yes, sir."

"And have been acting under distinct orders from outside?"

"Yes, sir."

"Willingly?"

"Yes, sir."

"*Gladly*, perhaps?"

"Yes, sir; it would do no good to deny it. The South is my country; my heart is Southern, and it is all in her cause."

"Then the tale you told me of your wrongs and the persecution of your family was made up for the occasion?"

"They—they told me to say it, sir."

"And you would betray and destroy those who pitied and sheltered you. Do you com-

prehend how base you are, you poor misguided thing?"

He replied with sobs only.

"Well, let that pass. To business. Who is the 'Colonel,' and where is he?"

He began to cry hard, and tried to beg off from answering. He said he would be killed if he told. I threatened to put him in the dark cell and lock him up if he did not come out with the information. At the same time I promised to protect him from all harm if he made a clean breast. For all answer, he closed his mouth firmly and put on a stubborn air which I could not bring him out of. At last I started with him; but a single glance into the dark cell converted him. He broke into a passion of weeping and supplicating, and declared he would tell everything.

So I brought him back, and he named the "Colonel," and described him particularly. Said he would be found at the principal hotel in the town, in citizen's dress. I had to threaten him again, before he would describe and name the "Master." Said the Master

would be found at No. 15 Bond Street, New York, passing under the name of R. F. Gaylord. I telegraphed name and description to the chief of police of the metropolis, and asked that Gaylord be arrested and held till I could send for him.

"Now," said I, "it seems that there are several of the conspirators 'outside,' presumably in New London. Name and describe them."

He named and described three men and two women,—all stopping at the principal hotel. I sent out quietly, and had them and the "Colonel" arrested and confined in the fort.

"Next, I want to know all about your three fellow-conspirators who are here in the fort."

He was about to dodge me with a falsehood, I thought; but I produced the mysterious bits of paper which had been found upon two of them, and this had a salutary effect upon him. I said we had possession of two of the men, and he must point out the third. This frightened him badly, and he cried out,—

"Oh, please don't make me; he would kill me on the spot!"

I said that that was all nonsense; I would have somebody near by to protect him, and, besides, the men should be assembled without arms. I ordered all the raw recruits to be mustered, and then the poor trembling little wretch went out and stepped along down the line, trying to look as indifferent as possible. Finally he spoke a single word to one of the men, and before he had gone five steps the man was under arrest.

As soon as Wicklow was with us again, I had those three men brought in. I made one of them stand forward, and said,—

"Now, Wicklow, mind, not a shade's divergence from the exact truth. Who is this man, and what do you know about him?"

Being "in for it," he cast consequences aside, fastened his eyes on the man's face, and spoke straight along without hesitation,—to the following effect.

"His real name is George Bristow. He is from New Orleans; was second mate of the coast-packet 'Capitol,' two years ago; is a desperate character, and has served two terms

for manslaughter,—one for killing a deck-hand named Hyde with a capstan-bar, and one for killing a roustabout for refusing to heave the lead, which is no part of a roustabout's business. He is a spy, and was sent here by the Colonel, to act in that capacity. He was third mate of the 'St. Nicholas,' when she blew up in the neighborhood of Memphis, in '58, and came near being lynched for robbing the dead and wounded while they were being taken ashore in an empty wood-boat."

And so forth and so on—he gave the man's biography in full. When he had finished, I said to the man,—

"What have you to say to this?"

"Barring your presence, sir, it is the infernalest lie that ever was spoke!"

I sent him back into confinement, and called the others forward in turn. Same result. The boy gave a detailed history of each, without ever hesitating for a word or a fact; but all I could get out of either rascal was the indignant assertion that it was all a lie. They would confess nothing. I returned them to captivity,

and brought out the rest of my prisoners, one by one. Wicklow told all about them—what towns in the South they were from, and every detail of their connection with the conspiracy.

But they all denied his facts, and not one of them confessed a thing. The men raged, the women cried. According to their stories, they were all innocent people from out West, and loved the Union above all things in this world. I locked the gang up, in disgust, and fell to catechising Wicklow once more.

"Where is No. 166, and who is B. B.?"

But *there* he was determined to draw the line. Neither coaxing nor threats had any effect upon him. Time was flying—it was necessary to institute sharp measures. So I tied him up a-tiptoe by the thumbs. As the pain increased, it wrung screams from him which were almost more than I could bear. But I held my ground, and pretty soon he shrieked out,—

"Oh, *please* let me down, and I will tell!"

"No—you'll tell *before* I let you down."

Every instant was agony to him, now, so out it came,—

"No. 166, Eagle Hotel!"—naming a wretched tavern down by the water, a resort of common laborers, 'longshoremen, and less reputable folk.

So I released him, and then demanded to know the object of the conspiracy.

"To take the fort to-night," said he, doggedly and sobbing.

"Have I got all the chiefs of the conspiracy?"

"No. You've got all except those that are to meet at 166."

"What does 'Remember XXXX' mean?"

No reply.

"What is the password to No. 166?"

No reply.

"What do those bunches of letters mean,—'FFFFF' and 'MMMM'? Answer! or you will catch it again."

"I never *will* answer! I will die first. Now do what you please."

"Think what you are saying, Wicklow. Is it final?"

He answered steadily, and without a quiver in his voice,—

"It is final. As sure as I love my wronged country and hate everything this Northern sun shines on, I will die before I will reveal those things."

I triced him up by the thumbs again. When the agony was full upon him, it was heart-breaking to hear the poor thing's shrieks, but we got nothing else out of him. To every question he screamed the same reply: "I can die, and I *will* die; but I will never tell."

Well, we had to give it up. We were convinced that he certainly would die rather than confess. So we took him down and imprisoned him, under strict guard.

Then for some hours we busied ourselves with sending telegrams to the War Department, and with making preparations for a descent upon No. 166.

It was stirring times, that black and bitter night. Things had leaked out, and the whole garrison was on the alert. The sentinels were trebled, and nobody could move, outside or in,

without being brought to a stand with a musket levelled at his head. However, Webb and I were less concerned now than we had previously been, because of the fact that the conspiracy must necessarily be in a pretty crippled condition, since so many of its principals were in our clutches.

I determined to be at No. 166 in good season, capture and gag B. B., and be on hand for the rest when they arrived. At about a quarter past one in the morning I crept out of the fortress with half a dozen stalwart and gamy U. S. regulars at my heels—and the boy Wicklow, with his hands tied behind him. I told him we were going to No. 166, and that if I found he had lied again and was misleading us, he would have to show us the right place or suffer the consequences.

We approached the tavern stealthily and reconnoitred. A light was burning in the small bar-room, the rest of the house was dark. I tried the front door; it yielded, and we softly entered, closing the door behind us. Then we removed our shoes, and I led the

way to the bar-room. The German landlord sat there, asleep in his chair. I woke him gently, and told him to take off his boots and precede us; warning him at the same time to utter no sound. He obeyed without a murmur, but evidently he was badly frightened. I ordered him to lead the way to 166. We ascended two or three flights of stairs as softly as a file of cats; and then, having arrived near the farther end of a long hall, we came to a door through the glazed transom of which we could discern the glow of a dim light from within. The landlord felt for me in the dark and whispered me that that was 166. I tried the door—it was locked on the inside. I whispered an order to one of my biggest soldiers; we set our ample shoulders to the door and with one heave we burst it from its hinges. I caught a half-glimpse of a figure in a bed—saw its head dart toward the candle; out went the light, and we were in pitch darkness. With one big bound I lit on that bed and pinned its occupant down with my knees. My prisoner struggled fiercely, but I got a grip on

his throat with my left hand, and that was a good assistance to my knees in holding him down. Then straightway I snatched out my revolver, cocked it, and laid the cold barrel warningly against his cheek.

"Now somebody strike a light!" said I. "I've got him safe."

It was done. The flame of the match burst up. I looked at my captive, and, by George, it was a young woman!

I let go and got off the bed, feeling pretty sheepish. Everybody stared stupidly at his neighbor. Nobody had any wit or sense left, so sudden and overwhelming had been the surprise. The young woman began to cry, and covered her face with the sheet. The landlord said, meekly,—

"My daughter, she has been doing something that is not right, *nicht wahr?*"

"Your daughter? Is she your daughter?"

"Oh, yes, she is my daughter. She is just to-night come home from Cincinnati a little bit sick."

"Confound it, that boy has lied again. This

is not the right 166; this is not B. B. Now, Wicklow, you will find the correct 166 for us, or—hello! where is that boy?"

Gone, as sure as guns! And, what is more, we failed to find a trace of him. Here was an awkward predicament. I cursed my stupidity in not tying him to one of the men; but it was of no use to bother about that now. What should I do in the present circumstances?—that was the question. That girl *might* be B. B., after all. I did not believe it, but still it would not answer to take unbelief for proof. So I finally put my men in a vacant room across the hall from 166, and told them to capture anybody and everybody that approached the girl's room, and to keep the landlord with them, and under strict watch, until further orders. Then I hurried back to the fort to see if all was right there yet.

Yes, all was right. And all remained right. I stayed up all night to make sure of that. Nothing happened. I was unspeakably glad to see the dawn come again, and be able to telegraph the Department that the Stars

and Stripes still floated over Fort Trumbull.

An immense pressure was lifted from my breast. Still I did not relax vigilance, of course, nor effort either; the case was too grave for that. I had up my prisoners, one by one, and harried them by the hour, trying to get them to confess, but it was a failure. They only gnashed their teeth and tore their hair, and revealed nothing.

About noon came tidings of my missing boy. He had been seen on the road, tramping westward, some eight miles out, at six in the morning. I started a cavalry lieutenant and a private on his track at once. They came in sight of him twenty miles out. He had climbed a fence and was wearily dragging himself across a slushy field toward a large old-fashioned mansion in the edge of a village. They rode through a bit of woods, made a detour, and closed up on the house from the opposite side; then dismounted and skurried into the kitchen. Nobody there. They slipped into the next room, which was also unoccupied; the door

from that room into the front or sitting room was open. They were about to step through it when they heard a low voice; it was somebody praying. So they halted reverently, and the lieutenant put his head in and saw an old man and an old woman kneeling in a corner of that sitting-room. It was the old man that was praying, and just as he was finishing his prayer, the Wicklow boy opened the front door and stepped in. Both of those old people sprang at him and smothered him with embraces, shouting,—

"Our boy! our darling! God be praised. The lost is found! He that was dead is alive again!"

Well, sir, what do you think! That young imp was born and reared on that homestead, and had never been five miles away from it in all his life, till the fortnight before he loafed into my quarters and gulled me with that maudlin yarn of his! It's as true as gospel. That old man was his father—a learned old retired clergyman; and that old lady was his mother.

Let me throw in a word or two of explanation concerning that boy and his performances. It turned out that he was a ravenous devourer of dime novels and sensation-story papers—therefore, dark mysteries and gaudy heroisms were just in his line. Then he had read newspaper reports of the stealthy goings and comings of rebel spies in our midst, and of their lurid purposes and their two or three startling achievements, till his imagination was all aflame on that subject. His constant comrade for some months had been a Yankee youth of much tongue and lively fancy, who had served for a couple of years as "mud clerk" (that is, subordinate purser) on certain of the packet-boats plying between New Orleans and points two or three hundred miles up the Mississippi —hence his easy facility in handling the names and other details pertaining to that region. Now I had spent two or three months in that part of the country before the war; and I knew just enough about it to be easily taken in by that boy, whereas a born Louisianian would probably have caught him tripping before he

had talked fifteen minutes. Do you know the reason he said he would rather die than explain certain of his treasonable enigmas? Simply because he *could n't* explain them!—they had no meaning; he had fired them out of his imagination without forethought or afterthought; and so, upon sudden call, he was n't able to invent an explanation of them. For instance, he could n't reveal what was hidden in the "sympathetic ink" letter, for the ample reason that there was n't anything hidden in it; it was blank paper only. He had n't put anything into a gun, and had never intended to—for his letters were all written to imaginary persons, and when he hid one in the stable he always removed the one he had put there the day before; so he was not acquainted with that knotted string, since he was seeing it for the first time when I showed it to him; but as soon as I had let him find out where it came from, he straightway adopted it, in his romantic fashion, and got some fine effects out of it. He invented Mr. "Gaylord;" there was n't any 15 Bond Street, just then—it had been

pulled down three months before. He invented the "Colonel;" he invented the glib histories of those unfortunates whom I captured and confronted with him; he invented "B. B.;" he even invented No. 166, one may say, for he did n't know there *was* such a number in the Eagle Hotel until we went there. He stood ready to invent anybody or anything whenever it was wanted. If I called for "outside" spies, he promptly described strangers whom he had seen at the hotel, and whose names he had happened to hear. Ah, he lived in a gorgeous, mysterious, romantic world during those few stirring days, and I think it was *real* to him, and that he enjoyed it clear down to the bottom of his heart.

But he made trouble enough for us, and just no end of humiliation. You see, on account of him we had fifteen or twenty people under arrest and confinement in the fort, with sentinels before their doors. A lot of the captives were soldiers and such, and to them I did n't have to apologize; but the rest were first-class citizens, from all over the country, and no

amount of apologies was sufficient to satisfy them. They just fumed and raged and made no end of trouble! And those two ladies,—one was an Ohio Congressman's wife, the other a Western bishop's sister,—well, the scorn and ridicule and angry tears they poured out on me made up a keepsake that was likely to make me remember them for a considerable time,—and I shall. That old lame gentleman with the goggles was a college president from Philadelphia, who had come up to attend his nephew's funeral. He had never seen young Wicklow before, of course. Well, he not only missed the funeral, and got jailed as a rebel spy, but Wicklow had stood up there in my quarters and coldly described him as a counterfeiter, nigger-trader, horse-thief, and fire-bug from the most notorious rascal-nest in Galveston; and this was a thing which that poor old gentleman could n't seem to get over at all.

And the War Department! But, O my soul, let's draw the curtain over that part!

NOTE.—I showed my manuscript to the Major, and he said: "Your unfamiliarity with military matters has be-

trayed you into some little mistakes. Still, they are picturesque ones—let them go; military men will smile at them, the rest won't detect them. You have got the main facts of the history right, and have set them down just about as they occurred."—M. T.

MRS. McWILLIAMS AND THE LIGHTNING.

WELL, sir,—continued Mr. McWilliams, for this was not the beginning of his talk;—the fear of lightning is one of the most distressing infirmities a human being can be affiicted with. It is mostly confined to women; but now and then you find it in a little dog, and sometimes in a man. It is a particularly distressing infirmity, for the reason that it takes the sand out of a person to an extent which no other fear can, and it can't be *reasoned* with, and neither can it be shamed out of a person. A woman who could face the very devil himself—or a mouse—loses her grip and goes all to pieces in front of a flash of lightning. Her fright is something pitiful to see.

Well, as I was telling you, I woke up, with that smothered and unlocatable cry of "Mor-

timer! Mortimer!" wailing in my ears; and as soon as I could scrape my faculties together I reached over in the dark and then said,—

"Evangeline, is that you calling? What is the matter? Where are you?"

"Shut up in the boot-closet. You ought to be ashamed to lie there and sleep so, and such an awful storm going on."

"Why, how *can* one be ashamed when he is asleep? It is unreasonable; a man *can't* be ashamed when he is asleep, Evangeline."

"You never try, Mortimer,—you know very well you never try."

I caught the sound of muffled sobs.

That sound smote dead the sharp speech that was on my lips, and I changed it to—

"I'm sorry, dear,—I'm truly sorry. I never meant to act so. Come back and—"

"MORTIMER!"

"Heavens! what is the matter, my love?"

"Do you mean to say you are in that bed yet?"

"Why, of course."

"Come out of it instantly. I should think

you would take some *little* care of your life, for *my* sake and the children's, if you will not for your own."

"But my love—"

"Don't talk to me, Mortimer. You *know* there is no place so dangerous as a bed, in such a thunder-storm as this,—all the books say that; yet there you would lie, and deliberately throw away your life,—for goodness knows what, unless for the sake of arguing and arguing, and—"

"But, confound it, Evangeline, I'm *not* in the bed, *now*. I'm—"

[Sentence interrupted by a sudden glare of lightning, followed by a terrified little scream from Mrs. McWilliams and a tremendous blast of thunder.]

"There! You see the result. Oh, Mortimer, how *can* you be so profligate as to swear at such a time as this?"

"I *didn't* swear. And that *was n't* a result of it, any way. It would have come, just the same, if I had n't said a word; and you know very well, Evangeline,—at least you ought to

know,—that when the atmosphere is charged with electricity—"

"Oh, yes, now argue it, and argue it, and argue it!—I don't see how you can act so, when you *know* there is not a lightning-rod on the place, and your poor wife and children are absolutely at the mercy of Providence. What *are* you doing?—lighting a match at such a time as this! Are you stark mad?"

"Hang it, woman, where's the harm? The place is as dark as the inside of an infidel, and—"

"Put it out! put it out instantly! Are you determined to sacrifice us all? You *know* there is nothing attracts lightning like a light. [*Fzt! —crash! boom — boloom-boom-boom!*] Oh, just hear it! Now you see what you've done!"

"No, I *don't* see what I've done. A match may attract lightning, for all I know, but it don't *cause* lightning,—I'll go odds on that. And it didn't attract it worth a cent this time; for if that shot was levelled at my match, it was blessed poor marksmanship, — about an

average of none out of a possible million, I should say. Why, at Dollymount, such marksmanship as that—"

"For shame, Mortimer! Here we are standing right in the very presence of death, and yet in so solemn a moment you are capable of using such language as that. If you have no desire to—Mortimer!"

"Well?"

"Did you say your prayers to-night?"

"I—I—meant to, but I got to trying to cipher out how much twelve times thirteen is, and—"

[*Fzt!—boom-berroom-boom! bumble-umble bang*-SMASH!]

"Oh, we are lost, beyond all help! How *could* you neglect such a thing at such a time as this?"

"But it *was n't* 'such a time as this.' There was n't a cloud in the sky. How could *I* know there was going to be all this rumpus and pow-wow about a little slip like that? And I don't think it's just fair for you to make so much out of it, any way, seeing it happens so seldom; I

have n't missed before since I brought on that earthquake, four years ago."

"MORTIMER! How you talk! Have you forgotten the yellow fever?"

"My dear, you are always throwing up the yellow fever to me, and I think it is perfectly unreasonable. You can't even send a telegraphic message as far as Memphis without relays, so how is a little devotional slip of mine going to carry so far? I'll *stand* the earthquake, because it was in the neighborhood; but I'll be hanged if I'm going to be responsible for every blamed—"

[*Fzt!*—BOOM *beroom*-boom! boom!—BANG!]

"Oh, dear, dear, dear! I *know* it struck something, Mortimer. We never shall see the light of another day; and if it will do you any good to remember, when we are gone, that your dreadful language—*Mortimer!*"

"WELL! What now?"

"Your voice sounds as if— Mortimer, are you actually standing in front of that open fireplace?"

"That is the very crime I am committing."

"Get away from it, this moment. You do seem determined to bring destruction on us all. Don't you *know* that there is no better conductor for lightning than an open chimney? *Now* where have you got to?"

"I'm here by the window."

"Oh, for pity's sake, have you lost your mind? Clear out from there, this moment. The very children in arms know it is fatal to stand near a window in a thunder-storm. Dear, dear, I know I shall never see the light of another day. Mortimer?"

"Yes?"

"What is that rustling?"

"It's me."

"What are you doing?"

"Trying to find the upper end of my pantaloons."

"Quick! throw those things away! I do believe you would deliberately put on those clothes at such a time as this; yet you know perfectly well that *all* authorities agree that woolen stuffs attract lightning. Oh, dear,

dear, it isn't sufficient that one's life must be in peril from natural causes, but you must do everything you can possibly think of to augment the danger. Oh, *don't* sing! What *can* you be thinking of?"

"Now where's the harm in it?"

"Mortimer, if I have told you once, I have told you a hundred times, that singing causes vibrations in the atmosphere which interrupt the flow of the electric fluid, and— What on *earth* are you opening that door for?"

"Goodness gracious, woman, is there is any harm in *that?*"

"*Harm?* There's *death* in it. Anybody that has given this subject any attention knows that to create a draught is to invite the lightning. You have n't half shut it; shut it *tight*, —and do hurry, or we are all destroyed. Oh, it is an awful thing to be shut up with a lunatic at such a time as this. Mortimer, what *are* you doing?"

"Nothing. Just turning on the water. This room is smothering hot and close. I want to bathe my face and hands."

"You have certainly parted with the remnant of your mind! Where lightning strikes any other substance once, it strikes water fifty times. Do turn it off. Oh, dear, I am sure that nothing in this world can save us. It does seem to me that— Mortimer, what was that?"

"It was a da— it was a picture. Knocked it down."

"Then you are close to the wall! I never heard of such imprudence! Don't you *know* that there's no better conductor for lightning than a wall? Come away from there! And you came as near as anything to swearing, too. Oh, how can you be so desperately wicked, and your family in such peril? Mortimer, did you order a feather bed, as I asked you to do?"

"No. Forgot it."

"Forgot it! It may cost you your life. If you had a feather bed, now, and could spread it in the middle of the room and lie on it, you would be perfectly safe. Come in here,— come quick, before you have a chance to commit any more frantic indiscretions."

I tried, but the little closet would not hold us both with the door shut, unless we could be content to smother. I gasped awhile, then forced my way out. My wife called out,—

"Mortimer, something *must* be done for your preservation. Give me that German book that is on the end of the mantel-piece, and a candle; but don't light it; give me a match; I will light it in here. That book has some directions in it."

I got the book,—at cost of a vase and some other brittle things; and the madam shut herself up with her candle. I had a moment's peace; then she called out,—

"Mortimer, what was that?"

"Nothing but the cat."

"The cat! Oh, destruction! Catch her, and shut her up in the wash-stand. Do be quick, love; cats are *full* of electricity. I just know my hair will turn white with this night's awful perils."

I heard the muffled sobbings again. But for that, I should not have moved hand or foot in such a wild enterprise in the dark.

However, I went at my task,—over chairs, and against all sorts of obstructions, all of them hard ones, too, and most of them with sharp edges,—and at last I got kitty cooped up in the commode, at an expense of over four hundred dollars in broken furniture and shins. Then these muffled words came from the closet:—

"It says the safest thing is to stand on a chair in the middle of the room, Mortimer; and the legs of the chair must be insulated, with non-conductors. That is, you must set the legs of the chair in glass tumblers. [*Fzt!—boom—bang!—smash!*] Oh, hear that! Do hurry, Mortimer, before you are struck."

I managed to find and secure the tumblers. I got the last four,—broke all the rest. I insulated the chair legs, and called for further instructions.

"Mortimer, it says, 'Während eines Gewitters entferne man Metalle, wie z. B., Ringe, Uhren, Schlüssel, etc., von sich und halte sich auch nicht an solchen Stellen auf, wo viele Metalle bei einander liegen, oder mit andern

Körpern verbunden sind, wie an Herden, Oefen, Eisengittern u. dgl.' What does that mean, Mortimer? Does it mean that you must keep metals *about* you, or keep them *away* from you?"

"Well, I hardly know. It appears to be a little mixed. All German advice is more or less mixed. However, I think that that sentence is mostly in the dative case, with a little genitive and accusative sifted in, here and there, for luck; so I reckon it means that you must keep some metals *about* you."

"Yes, that must be it. It stands to reason that it is. They are in the nature of lightning-rods, you know. Put on your fireman's helmet, Mortimer; that is mostly metal."

I got it and put it on,—a very heavy and clumsy and uncomfortable thing on a hot night in a close room. Even my night-dress seemed to be more clothing than I strictly needed.

"Mortimer, I think your middle ought to be protected. Won't you buckle on your militia sabre, please?"

I complied.

"Now, Mortimer, you ought to have some way to protect your feet. Do please put on your spurs."

I did it,—in silence,—and kept my temper as well as I could.

"Mortimer, it says, 'Das Gewitter läuten ist sehr gefährlich, weil die Glocke selbst, sowie der durch das Läuten veranlasste Luftzug und die Höhe des Thurmes den Blitz anziehen könnten.' Mortimer, does that mean that it is dangerous not to ring the church bells during a thunder-storm?"

"Yes, it seems to mean that,—if that is the past participle of the nominative case singular, and I reckon it is. Yes, I think it means that on account of the height of the church tower and the absence of *Luftzug* it would be very dangerous (*sehr gefährlich*) not to ring the bells in time of a storm; and moreover, don't you see, the very wording—"

"Never mind that, Mortimer; don't waste the precious time in talk. Get the large dinner-bell; it is right there in the hall. Quick, Mortimer dear; we are almost safe. Oh, dear,

I do believe we are going to be saved, at last!"

Our little summer establishment stands on top of a high range of hills, overlooking a valley. Several farm-houses are in our neighborhood,—the nearest some three or four hundred yards away.

When I, mounted on the chair, had been clanging that dreadful bell a matter of seven or eight minutes, our shutters were suddenly torn open from without, and a brilliant bull's-eye lantern was thrust in at the window, followed by a hoarse inquiry :—

"What in the nation is the matter here?"

The window was full of men's heads, and the heads were full of eyes that stared wildly at my night-dress and my warlike accoutrements.

I dropped the bell, skipped down from the chair in confusion, and said,—

"There is nothing the matter, friends,—only a little discomfort on account of the thunder-storm. I was trying to keep off the lightning."

"Thunder-storm? Lightning? Why, Mr McWilliams, have you lost your mind? It is a beautiful starlight night; there has been no storm."

I looked out, and I was so astonished I could hardly speak for a while. Then I said,—

"I do not understand this. We distinctly saw the glow of the flashes through the curtains and shutters, and heard the thunder."

One after another of those people lay down on the ground to laugh,—and two of them died. One of the survivors remarked,—

"Pity you did n't think to open your blinds and look over to the top of the high hill yonder. What you heard was cannon; what you saw was the flash. You see, the telegraph brought some news, just at midnight: Garfield's nominated,—and that's what's the matter!"

Yes, Mr. Twain, as I was saying in the beginning (said Mr. McWilliams), the rules for preserving people against lightning are so excellent and so innumerable that the most in-

comprehensible thing in the world to me is how anybody ever manages to get struck.

So saying, he gathered up his satchel and umbrella, and departed; for the train had reached his town.

[EXPLANATORY. I regard the idea of this play as a valuable invention. I call it the Patent Universally-Applicable Automatically-Adjustable Language Drama. This indicates that it is adjustable to any tongue, and performable in any tongue. The English portions of the play are to remain just as they are, permanently; but you change the foreign portions to any language you please, at will. Do you see? You at once have the same old play in a new tongue. And you can keep on changing it from language to language, until your private theatrical pupils have become glib and at home in the speech of all nations. *Zum Beispiel*, suppose we wish to adjust the play to the French tongue. First, we give Mrs. Blumenthal and Gretchen French names. Next, we knock the German Meisterschaft sentences out of the first scene, and replace them with sentences from the French Meisterschaft—like this, for instance; "Je voudrais faire des emplettes ce matin; voulez-vous avoir l'obligeance de venir avec moi chez le tailleur français?" And so on. Wherever you find German, replace it with French, leaving the English parts undisturbed. When you come to the long conversation in the second act, turn to any pamphlet of your French Meisterschaft, and shovel in as much French talk on *any* subject as will fill up the gaps left by the expunged German. Example—page 423 French Meisterschaft:

On dirait qu'il va faire chaud.
J'ai chaud.
J'ai extrêmement chaud.
Ah! qu'il fait chaud!
Il fait une chaleur étouffante!
L'air est brûlant.
Je meurs de chaleur.
Il est presque impossible de supporter la chaleur.
Cela vous fait transpirer.
Mettons nous à l'ombre.
Il fait du vent.
Il fait un vent froid.
Il fait un temps très-agréable pour se promener aujourd'hui.

And so on, all the way through. It is very easy to adjust the play to any desired language. Anybody can do it.]

MEISTERSCHAFT: IN THREE ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ:

MR. STEPHENSON. MARGARET STEPHENSON.
GEORGE FRANKLIN. ANNIE STEPHENSON.
WILLIAM JACKSON. MRS. BLUMENTHAL, the Wirthin.
GRETCHEN, Kellnerin.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Scene of the play, the parlor of a small private dwelling in a village.

MARGARET. (*Discovered crocheting—has a pamphlet.*)

MARGARET. (*Solus.*) Dear, dear! it's dreary enough, to have to study this impossible German tongue: to be exiled from home and all human society except a body's sister in order to do it, is just simply abscheulich. Here's only three weeks of the three months gone, and it seems like three years. I don't believe I can live through it, and I'm sure Annie can't. (*Refers to her book, and rattles through, sev-*

eral times, like one memorizing:) Entschuldigen Sie, mein Herr, können Sie mir vielleicht sagen, um wie viel Uhr der erste Zug nach Dresden abgeht? (*Makes mistakes and corrects them.*) I just hate Meisterschaft! We may see people; we can have society: yes, on condition that the conversation shall be in German, and in German only—every single word of it! Very kind—oh, very! when neither Annie nor I can put two words together, except as they are put together for us in Meisterschaft or that idiotic Ollendorff! (*Refers to book, and memorizes: Mein Bruder hat Ihren Herrn Vater nicht gesehen, als er gestern in dem Laden des deutschen Kaufmannes war.*) Yes, we can have society, provided we talk German. What would such a conversation be like! If you should stick to Meisterschaft, it would change the subject every two minutes; and if you stuck to Ollendorff, it would be all about your sister's mother's good stocking of thread, or your grandfather's aunt's good hammer of the carpenter, and who's got it, and there an end. You couldn't keep up your in-

terest in such topics. (*Memorizing: Wenn irgend möglich,—möchte ich noch heute Vormittag dort ankommen, da es mir sehr daran gelegen ist, einen meiner Geschäftsfreunde zu treffen.*) My mind is made up to one thing: I will be an exile, in spirit and in truth: I will see no one during these three months. Father is very ingenious—oh, very! thinks he is, anyway. Thinks he has invented a way to *force* us to learn to speak German. He is a dear good soul, and all that; but invention isn't his fash'. He will see. (*With eloquent energy.*) Why, nothing in the world shall—Bitte, können Sie mir vielleicht sagen, ob Herr Schmidt mit diesem Zuge angekommen ist? Oh, dear, dear George—three weeks! It seems a whole century since I saw him. I wonder if he suspects that I—that I—care for him——j—just a wee, wee bit? I believe he does. And I believe Will suspects that Annie cares for *him* a little, that I do. And I know perfectly well that they care for *us*. They agree with all our opinions, no matter what they are; and if they have a prejudice, they change it, as soon as

they see how foolish it is. Dear George! at first he just couldn't abide cats; but now, why now he's just all for cats; he fairly welters in cats. I never saw such a reform. And it's just so with *all* his principles: he hasn't got one that he had before. Ah, if all men were like him, this world would——(*Memorizing: Im Gegentheil, mein Herr, dieser Stoff is sehr billig. Bitte, sehen Sie sich nur die Qualität an.*) Yes, and what did *they* go to studying German for, if it wasn't an inspiration of the highest and purest sympathy? Any other explanation is nonsense——why, they'd as soon have thought of studying American history. (*Turns her back, buries herself in her pamphlet, first memorizing aloud, until Annie enters, then to herself, rocking to and fro, and rapidly moving her lips, without uttering a sound.*)

Enter Annie, absorbed in her pamphlet—does not at first see Margaret.

ANNIE. (*Memorizing: Er liess mich gestern früh rufen, und sagte mir dass er einen sehr unangenehmen Brief von Ihrem Lehrer*

erhalten hatte. Repeats twice aloud, then to herself, briskly moving her lips.)

M. (*Still not seeing her sister.*) Wie geht es Ihrem Herrn Schwiegervater? Es freut mich sehr dass Ihre Frau Mutter wieder wohl ist. (*Repeats. Then mouths in silence.*)

(*Annie repeats her sentence a couple of times aloud; then looks up, working her lips, and discovers Margaret.*) Oh, you here! (*Running to her.*) O lovey-dovey, dovey-lovey, I've got the gr-reatest news! Guess, guess, guess! You'll never guess in a hundred thousand million years—and more!

M. Oh, tell me, tell me, dearie; don't keep me in agony.

A. Well, I will. What—do—you—think? *They're* here!

M. Wh-a-t! Who? When? Which? Speak!

A. Will and George!

M. Annie Alexandra Victoria Stephenson, what *do* you mean!

A. As sure as guns!

M. (*Spasmodically unarming and kissing*

her.) 'Sh! don't use such language. O darling, say it again!

A. As sure as guns!

M. I don't mean that! Tell me again, that—

A. (*Springing up and waltzing about the room.*) They're here—in this very village—to learn German—for three months! Es sollte mich sehr freuen wenn Sie—

M. (*Joining in the dance.*) Oh, it's just too lovely for anything! (*Unconsciously memorizing:*) Es wäre mir lieb wenn Sie morgen mit mir in die Kirche gehen könnten, aber ich kann selbst nicht gehen, weil ich Sonntags gewöhnlich krank bin. Juckhe!

A. (*Finishing some unconscions memorizing.*)—morgen Mittag bei mir speisen könnten. Juckhe! Sit down and I'll tell you all I've heard. (*They sit.*) They're here, and under that same odious law that fetters us—our tongues, I mean; the metaphor's faulty, but no matter. They can go out, and see people, only on condition that they hear and speak German, and German only.

M. Isn't—that—too lovely !

A. And they're coming to see us !

M. Darling ! (*Kissing her.*) But are you sure ?

A. Sure as guns—Gatling guns !

M. 'Sh ! don't child, it's schrecklich ! Darling—you aren't mistaken ?

A. As sure as g—batteries !

They jump up and dance a moment—then—

M. (*With distress.*) But, Annie dear !—*we* can't talk German—and neither can they !

A. (*Sorrowfully.*) I didn't think of that.

M. How cruel it is ! What can we do ?

A. (*After a reflective pause, resolutely.*) Margaret—we've *got* to.

M. Got to what ?

A. Speak German.

M. Why, how, child ?

A. (*Contemplating her pamphlet with earnestness.*) I can tell you one thing. Just give me the blessed privilege: just hinsetzen Will Jackson here in front of me and I'll talk German to him as long as this Meisterschaft holds out to burn.

M. (*Joyously.*) Oh, what an elegant idea! You certainly have got a mind that's a mine of resources, if ever anybody had one.

A. I'll skin this Meisterschaft to the last sentence in it!

M. (*With a happy idea.*) Why, Annie, it's the greatest thing in the world. I've been all this time struggling and despairing over these few little Meisterschaft primers: but as sure as you live, I'll have the whole fifteen by heart before this time day after to-morrow. See if I don't.

A. And so will I; and I'll trowel-in a layer of Ollendorff mush between every couple of courses of Meisterschaft bricks. Juckhe!

M. Hoch! hoch! hoch!

A. Stoss an!

M. Juckhe! Wir werden gleich gute deutsche Schülerinnen werden! Juck——

A. —he!

M. Annie, when are they coming to see us? To-night?

A. No.

M. No? Why not? When are they coming?

What are they waiting for? The idea! I never heard of such a thing! What do you——

A. (*Breaking in.*) Wait, wait, wait! give a body a chance. They have their reasons.

M. Reasons?—what reasons?

A. Well, now, when you stop and think, they're royal good ones. They've got to talk German when they come, haven't they? Of course. Well, they don't *know* any German but Wie befinden Sie sich, and Haben Sie gut geschlafen, and Vater unser, and Ich trinke lieber Bier als Wasser, and a few little parlor things like that; but when it comes to *talking*, why, they don't know a hundred and fifty German words, put them all together.

M. Oh, I see!

A. So they're going neither to eat, sleep, smoke, nor speak the truth till they've crammed home the whole fifteen Meisterschafts auswendig!

M. Noble hearts!

A. They've given themselves till day after to-morrow, half-past 7 P. M., and then they'll arrive here, loaded.

M. Oh, how lovely, how gorgeous, how beautiful! Some think this world is made of mud; I think it's made of rainbows. (*Memorizing.*) Wenn irgend möglich, so möchte ich noch heute Vormittag dort ankommen, da es mir sehr daran gelegen ist,—Annie, I can learn it just like nothing!

A. So can I. Meisterschaft's mere fun—I don't see how it ever could have seemed difficult. Come! We can be disturbed here: let's give orders that we don't want anything to eat for two days; and are absent to friends, dead to strangers, and not at home even to nougat-peddlers——

M. Schön! and we'll lock ourselves into our rooms, and at the end of two days, whosoever may ask us a Meisterschaft question shall get a Meisterschaft answer—and hot from the bat!

BOTH. (*Reciting in unison.*) Ich habe einen Hut für meinen Sohn, ein Paar Handschuhe für meinen Bruder, und einen Kamm für mich selbst gekauft.

(Exeunt.)

Enter MRS. BLUMENTHAL, the Wirthin.

WIRTHIN. (*Solus.*) Ach, die armen Mädchen, sie hassen die deutsche Sprache, drum ist es ganz und gar unmöglich dass sie sie je lernen können. Es bricht mir ja mein Herz ihre Kummer über die Studien anzusehen . . . . Warum haben sie den Entchluss gefasst in ihren Zimmern ein Paar Tage zu bleiben? . . . Ja—gewiss—dass versteht sich: sie sind entmuthigt—arme Kinder!

(*A knock at the door.*) Herein!

Enter Gretchen with card.

G. Er ist schon wieder da, und sagt dass er nur *Sie* sehen will. (*Hands the card.*) Auch—

WIRTHIN. Gott im Himmel—der Vater der Mädchen! (*Puts the card in her pocket.*) Er wünscht die *Töchter* nicht zu treffen? Ganz recht; also, Du schweigst.

G. Zu Befehl.

WIRTHIN. Lass ihn hereinkommen.

G. Ja, Frau Wirthin!

Exit Gretchen.

WIRTHIN. (*Solus.*) Ah—jetzt muss ich ihm die Wahrheit offenbaren.

Enter Mr. Stephenson.

STEPHENSON. Good morning, Mrs. Blumenthal—keep your seat, keep your seat, please. I'm only here for a moment—merely to get your report, you know. (*Seating himself.*) Don't want to see the girls—poor things, they'd want to go home with me. I'm afraid I couldn't have the heart to say no. How's the German getting along?

WIRTHIN. N-not very well; I was afraid you would ask me that. You see, they hate it, they don't take the least interest in it, and there isn't anything to incite them to an interest, you see. And so they can't talk at all.

S. M-m. That's bad. I had an idea that they'd get lonesome, and have to seek society; and then, of course, my plan would work, considering the cast-iron conditions of it.

WIRTHIN. But it hasn't so far. I've thrown nice company in their way—I've done my very best, in every way I could think of—but it's no use; they won't go out, and they won't receive anybody. And a body can't blame them; they'd be tongue-tied—couldn't do anything

with a German conversation. Now when I started to learn German—such poor German as I know—the case was very different: my intended was a German. I was to live among Germans the rest of my life; and so I *had* to learn. Why, bless my heart! I nearly *lost* the man the first time he asked me—I thought he was talking about the measles. They were very prevalent at the time. Told him I didn't want any in mine. But I found out the mistake, and I was fixed for him next time. . . Oh, yes, Mr. Stephenson, a sweetheart's a prime incentive!

S. (*Aside.*) Good soul! she doesn't suspect that my plan is a double scheme—includes a speaking knowledge of German, which I am bound they shall have, and the keeping them away from those two young fellows—though if I had known that those boys were going off for a year's foreign travel, I—however, the girls would never learn that language at home; they're here, and I won't relent—they've got to stick the three months out. (*Aloud.*) So they are making poor progress? Now tell

me—will they learn it—after a sort of fashion, I mean—in the three months ?

WIRTHIN. Well, now, I'll tell you the only chance I see. Do what I will, they won't answer my German with anything but English; if that goes on, they'll stand stock still. Now I'm willing to do this: I'll straighten everything up, get matters in smooth running order, and day after to-morrow I'll go to bed sick, and stay sick three weeks.

S. Good! You are an angel! I see your idea. The servant girl—

WIRTHIN. That's it; that's my project. She doesn't know a word of English. And Gretchen's a real good soul, and can talk the slates off a roof. Her tongue's just a flutter-mill. I'll keep my room,—just ailing a little,—and they'll never see my face except when they pay their little duty-visits to me, and then I'll say English disorders my mind. They'll be shut up with Gretchen's wind-mill, and she'll just grind them to powder. Oh, *they'll* get a start in the language—sort of a one, sure's you live. You come back in three weeks.

S. Bless you, my Retterin! I'll be here to the day! Get ye to your sick-room—you shall have treble pay. (*Looking at watch.*) Good! I can just catch my train. Leben Sie wohl! (*Exit.*)

WIRTHIN. Leben Sie wohl! mein Herr!

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Time, a couple of days later.
(The girls discovered with their work and primers.)

ANNIE. Was fehlt der Wirthin?

MARGARET. Dass weiss ich nicht. Sie ist schon vor zwei Tagen ins Bett gegangen—

A. My! how fleissend you speak!

M. Danke schön—und sagte dass sie nicht wohl sei.

A. Good! Oh, no, I don't mean that! no —only lucky for *us*—glücklich, you know I mean because it'll be so much nicer to have them all to ourselves.

M. Oh, natürlich! Ja! Dass ziehe ich

durchaus vor. Do you believe your Meisterschaft will stay with you, Annie?

A. Well, I know it *is* with me—every last sentence of it; and a couple of hods of Ollendorff, too, for emergencies. May be they'll refuse to deliver,—right off—at first, you know—der Verlegenheit wegen—aber ich will sie später herausholen—when I get my hand in—und vergisst Du dass nicht!

M. Sei nicht grob, Liebste. What shall we talk about first—when they come?

A. Well—let me see. There's shopping—and—all that about the trains, you know,—and going to church—and—buying tickets to London, and Berlin, and all around—and all that subjunctive stuff about the battle in Afghanistan, and where the American was said to be born, and so on—and—and ah—oh, there's so *many* things—I don't think a body can choose beforehand, because you know the circumstances and the atmosphere always have so much to do in directing a conversation, especially a German conversation, which is only a kind of an insurrection, any way. I believe

it's best to just depend on Prov—(*Glancing at watch, and gasping*)—half past—seven!

M. Oh, dear, I'm all of a tremble! Let's get something ready, Annie!

(*Both fall nervously to reciting*): Entschuldigen Sie, mein Herr, können Sie mir vielleicht sagen wie ich nach dem norddeutchen Bahnhof gehe? (*They repeat it several times, losing their grip and mixing it all up.*)

(A knock.)

BOTH. Herein! Oh, dear! O der heilige—

Enter Gretchen.

GRETCHEN (*Ruffled and indignant.*) Entschuldigen Sie, meine gnädigsten Fräulein, es sind zwei junge rasende Herren draussen, die herein wollen, aber ich habe ihnen geschworen dass—(*Handing the cards.*)

M. Du liebe Zeit, they're here! And of course down goes my back hair! Stay and receive them, dear, while I—(*Leaving.*)

A. I—alone? I won't! I'll go with you! (*To* G.) Lass en Sie die Herren näher treten;

und sagen Sie ihnen dass wir gleich zurückkommen werden. (*Exit.*)

GR. (*Solus.*) Was! Sie freuen sich darüber? Und ich sollte wirklich diese Blödsinnigen, dies grobe Rindvieh hereinlassen? In den hülflosen Umständen meiner gnädigen jungen Damen? —Unsinn! (*Pause—thinking.*) Wohlan! Ich werde sie mal beschützen! Sollte man nicht glauben, dass sie einen Sparren zu viel hätten? (*Tapping her skull significantly.*) Was sie mir doch Alles gesagt haben! Der Eine: Guten Morgen! wie geht es Ihrem Herrn Schwiegervater? Du liebe Zeit! Wie sollte ich einen Schwiegervater haben können! Und der Andere: "Es thut mir sehr leid dass Ihrer Herr Vater meinen Bruder nicht gesehen hat, als er doch gestern in dem Laden des deutschen Kaufmannes war!" Potztausendhimmelsdonnerwetter! Oh, ich war ganz rasend! Wie ich aber rief: "Meine Herren, ich kenne Sie nicht, und Sie kennen meinen Vater nicht, wissen Sie, denn er ist schon lange durchgebrannt, und geht nicht beim Tage in einen Laden hinein, wissen Sie,—und ich habe keinen Schwieger-

vater, Gott sei Dank, werde auch nie einen kriegen, werde ueberhaupt, wissen Sie, ein solches Ding nie haben, nie dulden, nie ausstehen: warum greifen Sie ein Mädchen an, das nur Unschuld kennt, das Ihnen nie Etwas zu Leide gethan hat?" Dann haben sie sich beide die Finger in die Ohren gesteckt und gebetet: "Allmächtiger Gott! Erbarme Dich unser!" (*Pauses.*) Nun, ich werde schon diesen Schurken Einlass gönnen, aber ich werde ein Auge mit ihnen haben, damit sie sich nicht wie reine Teufel geberden sollen.

(*Exit, grumbling and shaking her head.*)

Enter William and George.

W. My land, what a girl! and what an incredible gift of gabble!—kind of patent climate-proof compensation-balance self-acting automatic Meisterschaft—touch her button, and br-r-r! away she goes!

GEO. Never heard anything like it; tongue journaled on ball-bearings! I wonder what she said; seemed to be swearing, mainly.

W. (*After mumbling Meisterschaft awhile.*)

Look here, George, this is awful—come to think—this project: *we* can't talk this frantic language.

GEO. I know it, Will, and it *is* awful; but I can't live without seeing Margaret—I've endured it as long as I can. I should die if I tried to hold out longer—and even German is preferable to death.

W. (*Hesitatingly.*) Well, I don't know; it 's a matter of opinion.

GEO. (*Irritably.*) It is n't a matter of opinion either. German *is* preferable to death.

W. (*Reflectively.*) Well, I don't know—the problem is so sudden—but I think you may be right: some kinds of death. It is more than likely that a slow, lingering—well, now, there in Canada in the early times a couple of centuries ago, the Indians would take a missionary and skin him, and get some hot ashes and boiling water and one thing and another, and by and by, that missionary—well, yes, I can see that, by and by, talking German could be a pleasant change for him.

GEO. Why, of course. Das versteht sich;

but *you* have to always think a thing out, or you're not satisfied. But let 's not go to bothering about thinking out this present business; we're here, we're in for it; you are as moribund to see Annie as I am to see Margaret; you know the terms: we've got to speak German. Now stop your mooning and get at your Meisterschaft; we've got nothing else in the world.

W. Do you think that 'll see us through?

GEO. Why it's *got* to. Suppose we wandered out of it and took a chance at the language on our own responsibility, where the nation would we be? Up a stump, that's where. Our only safety is in sticking like wax to the text.

W. But what can we talk about?

GEO. Why, anything that Meisterschaft talks about. It ain't our affair.

W. I know; but Meisterschaft talks about everything.

GEO. And yet don't talk about anything long enough for it to get embarrassing. Meisterschaft is just splendid for general conversation.

W. Yes, that's so; but it's so *blamed* general! Won't it sound foolish?

GEO. Foolish? Why, of course; all German sounds foolish.

W. Well, that is true; I didn't think of that.

GEO. Now, don't fool around any more. Load up; load up; get ready. Fix up some sentences; you'll need them in two minutes now.

(*They walk up and down, moving their lips in dumb-show memorizing.*)

W. Look here—when we've said all that's in the book on a topic, and want to change the subject, how can we say so?—how would a German say it?

GEO. Well, I don't know. But you know when they mean "Change cars," they say *Umsteigen.* Don't you reckon that will answer?

W. Tip-top! It's short and goes right to the point; and it's got a business whang to it that's almost American. Umsteigen!—change subject!—why, it's the very thing.

GEO. All right, then, *you* umsteigen—for I hear them coming.

Enter the girls.

A. TO W. (*With solemnity.*) Guten morgen, mein Herr, es freut mich sehr, Sie zu sehen.

W. Guten morgen, mein Fräulein, es freut mich sehr Sie zu sehen.

(*Margaret and George repeat the same sentences. Then, after an embarrassing silence, Margaret refers to her book and says:*)

M. Bitte, meine Herren, setzen Sie sich.

THE GENTLEMEN. Danke schön. (*The four seat themselves in couples, the width of the stage apart, and the two conversations begin. The talk is not flowing—at any rate at first; there are painful silences all along. Each couple worry out a remark and a reply: there is a pause of silent thinking, and then the other couple deliver themselves.*)

W. Haben Sie meinen Vater in dem Laden meines Bruders nicht gesehen?

A. Nein, mein Herr, ich habe Ihren Herrn Vater in dem Laden Ihres Herrn Bruders nicht gesehen.

GEO. Waren Sie gestern Abend im Koncert, oder im Theater?

M. Nein, ich war gestern Abend nicht im Koncert, noch im Theater, ich war gestern Abend zu Hause.

General break-down—long pause.

W. Ich störe doch nicht etwa?

A. Sie stören mich durchaus nicht.

GEO. Bitte, lassen Sie sich nicht von mir stören.

M. Aber ich bitte Sie, Sie stören mich durchaus nicht.

W. (*To both girls.*) Wen wir Sie stören so gehen wir gleich wieder.

A. O, nein! Gewiss, nein!

M. Im Gegentheil, es freut uns sehr, Sie zu sehen—alle Beide.

W. Schön!

GEO. Gott sei dank!

M. (*Aside.*) It's just lovely!

A. (*Aside.*) It's like a poem.

Pause.

W. Umsteigen!

M. Um—welches?

W. Umsteigen.

GEO. Auf English, change cars—oder subject.

BOTH GIRLS. Wie schön!

W. Wir haben uns die Freiheit genommen, bei Ihnen vorzusprechen.

A. Sie sind sehr gütig.

GEO. Wir wollten uns erkundigen, wie Sie sich befänden.

M. Ich bin Ihnen sehr verbunden—meine Schwester auch.

W. Meine Frau lasst sich Ihnen bestens empfehlen.

A. Ihre *Frau?*

W. (*Examining his book.*) Vielleicht habe ich mich geirrt. (*Shows the place.*) Nein, gerade so sagt das Buch.

A. (*Satisfied.*) Ganz recht. Aber—

W. Bitte empfehlen Sie mich Ihrem Herrn Bruder.

A. Ah, dass ist viel besser—viel besser. (*Aside.*) Wenigstens es wäre viel besser wenn ich einen Bruder hätte.

GEO. Wie ist es Ihnen gegangen, seitdem ich das Vergnügen hätte, Sie anderswo zu sehen?

M. Danke bestens, ich befinde mich gewöhnlich ziemlich wohl.

Gretchen slips in with a gun, and listens.

GEO. (*Still to Margaret.*) Befindet sich Ihre Frau Gemahlin wohl?

GR. (*Raising hands and eyes.*) *Frau Gemahlin*—heiliger Gott! (*Is like to betray herself with her smothered laughter and glides out.*)

M. Danke sehr, meine Frau ist ganz wohl.

Pause.

W. Dürfen wir vielleicht—umsteigen?

THE OTHERS. Gut!

GEO. (*Aside.*) I feel better, now. I'm beginning to catch on. (*Aloud.*) Ich möchte gern morgen früh einige Einkäufe machen und würde Ihnen sehr verbunden sein, wenn Sie mir den Gefallen thäten, mir die Namen der besten hiesigen Firmen aufzuschreiben.

M. (*Aside.*) How sweet!

W. (*Aside.*) Hang it, *I* was going to say that! That's one of the noblest things in the book.

A. Ich möchte Ihnen gern begleiten, aber es ist mir wirklich heute Morgen ganz unmöglich auszugehen. (*Aside.*) It's getting as easy as 9 times 7 is 46.

M. Sagen Sie dem Brieftäger, wenn's gefällig ist, er möchte Ihnen den ein geschriebenen Brief geben lassen.

W. Ich würde Ihnen sehr verbunden sein, wenn Sie diese Schachtel für mich nach der Post tragen würden, da mir sehr daran liegt einen meiner Geschäftsfreunde in dem Laden des deutchen Kaufmanns heute Abend treffen zu können. (*Aside.*) All down but nine; set 'm up on the other alley !

A. Aber Herr Jackson ! Sie haben die Sätze gemischt. Es ist unbegreiflich wie Sie das haben thun können. Zwischen Ihrem ersten Theil und Ihrem letzten Theil haben Sie ganze fünfzig Seiten übergeschlagen ! Jetzt bin ich ganz verloren. Wie kann man reden, wenn man seinen Platz durchaus nicht wieder finden kann ?

W. Oh, bitte, verzeihen Sie; ich habe dass wirklich nich beabsichtigt.

A. (*Mollified.*) Sehr wohl, lassen Sie gut sein. Aber thun Sie es nicht wieder. Sie müssen ja doch einräumen, dass solche Dinge unerträgliche Verwirrung mit sich führen.

(*Gretchen slips in again with her gun.*)

W. Unzweifelhaft haben Sie Recht, meine holdselige Landsmännin. . . . . Umsteigen!

(As George gets fairly into the following, Gretchen draws a bead on him, and lets drive at the close, but the gun snaps.)

GEO. Glauben Sie dass ich ein hübsches Wohnzimmer für mich selbst und ein kleines Schlafzimmer für meinen Sohn in diesem Hotel für fünfzehn Mark die Woche bekommen kann, oder würden Sie mir rathen, in einer Privatwohnung Logis zu nehmen? (*Aside.*) That's a daisy!

GR. (*Aside.*) Schade! (*She draws her charge and reloads.*)

M. Glauben Sie nicht Sie werden besser thun bei diesem Wetter zu Hause zu bleiben?

A. Freilich glaube ich, Herr Franklin, Sie werden sich erkälten, wenn Sie bei diesem

unbeständigen Wetter ohne Ueberrock ausgehen.

GR. (*Relieved—aside.*) So? Man redet von Ausgehen. Das klingt schon besser. (*Sits.*)

W. (*To A.*) Wie theuer haben Sie das gekauft? (*Indicating a part of her dress.*)

A. Das hat achtzehn Mark gekostet.

W. Das ist sehr theuer.

GEO. Ja, obgleich dieser Stoff wunderschön ist und das Muster sehr geschmackvoll und auch das Vorzüglichste dass es in dieser Art gibt, so ist es doch furchtbar theuer für einen solchen Artikel.

M. (*Aside.*) How sweet is this communion of soul with soul!

A. Im Gegentheil, mein Herr, das ist sehr billig. Sehen Sie sich nur die Qualität an.

(*They all examine it.*)

GEO. Möglicherweise ist es das allerneuste dass man in diesem Stoff hat; aber das Muster gefällt mir nicht.

(Pause.)

W. Umsteigen!

A. Welchen Hund haben Sie? Haben Sie

den hübschen Hund des Kaufmanns, oder den hässlichen Hund der Urgrossmutter des Lehrlings des bogenbeinigen Zimmermanns?

W. (*Aside.*) Oh, come, she's ringing in a cold deck on us: that's Ollendorff.

GEO. Ich habe nicht den Hund des—des —(*Aside.*) Stuck! That's no Meisterschaft; they don't play fair. (*Aloud.*) Ich habe nicht den Hund des — des— In unserem Buche leider, gibt es keinen Hund; daher, ob ich auch gern von solchen Thieren sprechen möchte, ist es mir doch unmöglich, weil ich nicht vorbereitet bin. Entschuldigen Sie, meine Damen.

GR. (*Aside.*) Beim Teufel, sie sind *alle* blödsinnig geworden. In meinem Leben habe ich nie ein so närrisches, verfluchtes, verdammtes Gespräch gehört

W. Bitte, umsteigen.

(Run the following rapidly through.)

M. (*Aside.*) Oh, I've flushed an easy batch! (*Aloud.*) Würden Sie mir erlauben meine Reisetasche hier hinzustellen?

GR. (*Aside.*) Wo ist seine Reisetasche? Ich sehe keine.

W. Bitte sehr.

GEO. Ist meine Reisetasche Ihnen im Wege?

GR. (*Aside.*) Und wo ist *seine* Reisetasche?

A. Erlauben Sie mir Sie von meiner Reisetasche zu befreien.

GR. (*Aside.*) Du Esel!

W. Ganz und gar nicht. (*To Geo.*) Es ist sehr schwül in diesem Coupé.

GR. (*Aside.*) Coupè.

GEO. Sie haben Recht. Erlauben Sie mir, gefälligst, das Fenster zu öffnen. Ein wenig Luft würde uns got thun.

M. Wir fahren sehr rasch.

A. Haben Sie den Namen jener Station gehört?

W. Wie lange halten wir auf dieser Station an?

GEO. Ich reise nach Dresden, Schaffner. Wo muss ich umsteigen?

A. Sie steigen nicht um, Sie bleiben sitzen.

GR. (*Aside.*) Sie sind ja alle ganz und gar

verrückt! Man denke sich sie glauben dass sie auf der Eisenbahn reisen.

GEO. (*Aside, to William*) Now brace up; pull all your confidence together, my boy, and we'll try that lovely good-bye business a flutter. I think it's about the gaudiest thing in the book, if you boom it right along and don't get left on a base. It'll impress the girls. (*Aloud.*) Lassen Sie uns gehen: es ist schon sehr spät, und ich muss morgen ganz früh aufstehen.

GR. (*Aside—grateful.*) Gott sei Dank dass sie endlich gehen. (*Sets her gun aside.*)

W. (*To Geo.*) Ich danke Ihnen höflichst für die Ehre die sie mir erweisen, aber ich kann nicht länger bleiben.

GEO. (*To W.*) Entschuldigen Sie mich gütigst, aber ich kann wirklich nicht länger bleiben.

Gretchen looks on stupefied.

W. (*To Geo.*) Ich habe schon eine Einladung angenommen; ich kann wirklich nicht länger bleiben.

Gretchen fingers her gun again.

GEO. (*To W.*) Ich muss gehen.

W. (*To Geo.*) Wie! Sie wollen schon wieder gehen? Sie sind ja eben erst gekommen.

M. (*Aside*). It's just music!

A. (*Aside.*) Oh, how lovely they do it!

GEO. (*To W.*) Also denken sie doch noch nicht an's Gehen.

W. (*To Geo.*) Es thut mir unendlich leid, aber ich muss nach Hause. Meine Frau wird sich wundern, was aus mir geworden ist.

GEO. (*To W.*) Meine Frau hat keine Ahnung wo ich bin: ich muss wirklich jetzt fort.

W. (*To Geo.*) Dann will ich Sie nicht länger aufhalten; ich bedaure sehr dass Sie uns einen so kurzen Besuch gemacht haben.

GEO. (*To W.*) Adieu—auf recht baldiges Wiedersehen.

W. UMSTEIGEN!

Great hand-clapping from the girls.

M. (*Aside.*) Oh, how perfect! how elegant!

A. (*Aside.*) Per-fectly enchanting!

JOYOUS CHORUS. (*All.*) Ich habe gehabt,

du hast gehabt, er hat gehabt, wir haben gehabt, ihr habet gehabt, sie haben gehabt.

Gretchen faints, and tumbles from her chair, and the gun goes off with a crash. Each girl, frightened, seizes the protecting hand of her sweetheart. Gretchen scrambles up. Tableau.

W. (*Takes out some money—beckons Gretchen to him. George adds money to the pile.*) Hübsches Mädchen (*giving her some of the coins*), hast Du etwas gesehen?

GR. (*Courtesy—aside.*) Der Engel! (*Aloud—impressively.*) Ich habe nichts gesehen.

W. (*More money.*) Hast Du etwas gehört?

GR. Ich habe nichts gehört.

W. (*More money.*) Und Morgen?

GR. Morgen—wäre es nöthig—bin ich taub und blind.

W. Unvergleichbares Mädchen! Und (*giving the rest of the money*) darnach?

GR. (*Deep courtesy—aside.*) Erzengel! (*Aloud.*) Darnach, mien gnädgister, betrachten Sie mich also *taub—blind—todt!*

ALL. (*In chorus—with reverent joy.*) Ich habe gehabt, du hast gehabt, er hat gehabt,

wir haben gehabt, ihr habet gehabt, sie haben gehabt!

ACT III.

Three weeks later.

SCENE I.

Enter Gretchen, and puts her shawl on a chair. Brushing around with the traditional feather-duster of the drama. Smartly dressed, for she is prosperous.

GR. Wie hätte man sich das vorstellen können! In nur drei Wochen bin ich schon reich geworden! (*Gets out of her pocket handful after handful of silver, which she piles on the table, and proceeds to re-pile and count, occasionally ringing or biting a piece to try its quality.*) Oh, dass (*with a sigh*) die Frau Wirthin nur *ewig* krank bliebe! . . . . Diese edlen jungen Männer—sie sind ja so liebenswürdig! Und so fleissig!—und so treu! Jeden Morgen kommen sie gerade um drei Viertel auf neun; und plaudern und schwatzen, und plappern, und schnattern, die jungen Damen auch; um Schlage zwölf nehmen sie Abschied; um Schlage eins kommen sie schon

wieder, und plaudern und, schwatzen und plappern und schnattern; gerade um sechs Uhr nehmen sie wiederum Abschied; um halb acht kehren sie noch'emal zurück, und plaudern und schwatzen und plappern und schnattern bis zehn Uhr, oder vielleicht ein Viertel nach, falls ihre Uhren nach gehen (und stets gehen sie nach am Ende des Besuchs, aber stets vor Beginn desselben), und zuweilen unterhalten sich die jungen Leute beim Spazierengehen; und jeden Sonntag gehen sie dreimal in die Kirche; und immer plaudern sie, und schwatzen und plappern und schnattern bis ihnen die Zähnen aus dem Munde fallen. Und *ich?* Durch Mangel an Uebung, ist mir die Zunge mit Moos belegt worden! Freilich ist's mir eine dumme Zeit gewesen. Aber—um Gotteswillen, was geht das mir an? Was soll ich daraus machen? Täglich sagt die Frau Wirthin "Gretchen" (*dumb-show of paying a piece of money into her hand*), "du bist eine der besten Sprach-Lehrerinnen der Welt!" Ach, Gott! Und täglich sagen die edlen jungen Männer, "Gretchen, liebes

Kind" (*money-paying again in dumb-show—three coins*), "bleib' taub—blind—todt!" und so bleibe ich. . . . . Jetzt wird es ungefähr neun Uhr sein; bald kommen sie vom Spaziergehen zurück. Also, es wäre gut dass ich meinem eigenen Schatz einen Besuch abstatte und spazieren gehe. (*Dons her shawl.*)

Exit. L.

Enter Wirthin. R.

WIRTHIN. That was Mr. Stephenson's train that just came in. Evidently the girls are out walking with Gretchen;—can't find *them*, and *she* doesn't seem to be around. (*A ring at the door.*) That's him. I'll go see.

Exit. R.

Enter Stephenson and Wirthin. R.

S. Well, how does sickness seem to agree with you?

WIRTHIN. So well that I've never been out of my room since, till I heard your train come in.

S. Thou miracle of fidelity! Now I argue from that, that the new plan is working.

WIRTHIN. Working? Mr. Stephenson, you never saw anything like it in the whole course of your life! It's absolutely wonderful the way it works.

S. Succeeds? No—you don't mean it.

WIRTHIN. Indeed I do mean it. I tell you, Mr. Stephenson, that plan was just an inspiration—that's what it was. You could teach a cat German by it.

S. Dear me, this is noble news! Tell me about it.

WIRTHIN. Well, it's all Gretchen — ev-ery bit of it. I told you she was a jewel. And then the sagacity of that child—why, I never dreamed it was in her. Sh-she, "Never you ask the young ladies a question—never let on —just keep mum—leave the whole thing to me," sh-she.

S. Good! And she justified, did she?

WIRTHIN. Well, sir, the amount of German gabble that that child crammed into those two girls inside the next forty-eight hours—well, *I* was satisfied! So I've never asked a question —never *wanted* to ask any. I've just lain

curled up there, happy. The little dears ! they 've flitted in to see me a moment, every morning and noon and supper-time ; and as sure as I'm sitting here, inside of six days they were clattering German to me like a house afire !

S. Sp-lendid, splendid !

WIRTHIN. Of course it ain't grammatical—the inventor of the language can't talk grammatical ; if the Dative didn't fetch him the Accusative would ; but it's German all the same, and don't you forget it !

S. Go on—go on—this is delicious news—

WIRTHIN. Gretchen, she says to me at the start, "Never you mind about company for 'em," sh-she—"I'm company enough." And I says, "All right — fix it your own way, child"; and that she *was* right is shown by the fact that to this day they don't care a straw for any company but hers.

S. Dear me ; why, it's admirable !

WIRTHIN. Well, I should think so! They just dote on that hussy—can't seem to get enough of her. Gretchen tells me so herself. And the care she takes of them ! She tells me that

every time there's a moonlight night she coaxes them out for a walk ; and if a body can believe her, she actually bullies them off to church three times every Sunday!

S. Why, the little dev—missionary! Really, she's a genius!

WIRTHIN. She's a bud, *I* tell you! Dear me, how she's brought those girls' health up! Cheeks?—just roses. Gait?—they walk on watch-springs! And happy?—by the bliss in their eyes, you 'd think they're in Paradise! Ah, that Gretchen! Just you imagine *our* trying to achieve these marvels!

S. You're right—every time. Those girls—why, all they 'd have wanted to know was what we wanted done—and then they wouldn't have *done* it—the mischievous young rascals!

WIRTHIN. Don't tell *me?* Bless you, I found that out early—when *I* was bossing.

S. Well, I'm im-mensely pleased. *Now* fetch them down. I'm not afraid now. They won't want to go home.

WIRTHIN. Home! I don't believe you could drag them away from Gretchen with nine span

of horses. But if you want to see them, put on your hat and come along; they're out somewhere trapsing along with Gretchen. (*Going.*)

S. I'm with you—lead on.

WIRTHIN. We'll go out the side door. It's toward the Anlage.

Exit both. L.

Enter George and Margaret. R.

Her head lies upon his shoulder, his arm is about her waist; they are steeped in sentiment.

M. (*Turning a fond face up at him.*) Du Engel!

G. Liebste! (*Kiss.*)

M. Oh, das Liedchen dass Du mir gewidmet hast—es ist so schön, so wunderschön. Wie hätte ich je geahnt dass Du ein Poët wärest!

G. Mein Schätzchen!—es ist mir lieb wenn Dir die Kleinigkeit gefällt.

M. Ah, es ist mit der zärtlichsten Musik gefüllt—klingt ja so süss und selig—wie das Flüstern des Sommerwindes die Abenddämmerung hindurch. Wieder,—Theuerste!—sag' es wieder.

G. Du bist wie eine Blume!—
So schön und hold und rein—
Ich schau Dich an, und Wehmuth
Schleicht mir ins Herz hinein.
Mir ist als ob ich die Hände
Aufs Haupt Dir legen sollt,
Betend dass Gott Dich erhalte,
So rein und schön und hold.

M. A-ch! (*Dumb-show sentimentalisms.*) Georgie—

G. Kindchen!

M. Warum kommen sie nicht?

G. Dass weiss ich gar nicht. Sie waren—

M. Es wird spät. Wir müssen sie antreiben. Komm!

G. Ich glaube sie werden recht bald ankommen, aber—

Exit both. L.

Enter Gretchen, R., in a state of mind. Slumps into a chair limp with despair.

GR. Ach! was wird jetzt aus mir werden! Zufällig habe ich in der Ferne den verdammten Papa gesehen!—und die Frau Wirthin auch! Oh, diese Erscheinung,—die hat mir beinahe das Leben genommen. Sie suchen die jungen Damen—das weiss ich wenn sie

diese und die jungen Herren zusammen fänden —du heiliger Gott! Wenn das geschicht, wären wir Alle ganz und gar verloren! Ich muss sie gleich finden, und ihr eine Warnung geben!

Exit. L.

Enter Annie and Will. R.

Posed like the former couple and sentimental.

A. Ich liebe sich schon so sehr—Deiner edlen Natur wegen. Dass du dazu auch ein Dichter bist!—ach, mein Leben ist uebermässig reich geworden! Wir hätte sich doch einbilden können dass ich einen Mann zu einem so wunderschönen Gedicht hätte begeistern können!

W. Liebste! Es ist nur eine Kleinigkeit.

A. Nein, nein, es ist ein echtes Wunder! Sage es noch einmal—ich flehe Dich an.

W. Du bist wie eine Blume!—
So schön und hold und rein—
Ich schau Dich an, und Wehmuth
Schleicht mir ins Herz hinein.
Mir ist als ob ich die Hände
Aufs Haupt Dir legen sollt,
Betend dass Gott Dich erhalte,
So rein und schön und hold.

A. Ach, es ist himmlisch—einfach himmlisch. (*Kiss.*) Schreibt auch George Gedichte?

W. Oh, ja—zuweilen.

A. Wie schön!

W. (*Aside.*) Smouches 'em, same as I do! It was a noble good idea to play that little thing on her. George wouldn't ever think of that—somehow he never had any invention.

A. (*Arranging chairs.*) Jetzt will ich bei Dir sitzen bleiben, und Du—

W. (*They sit.*) Ja,—und ich—

A. Du wirst mir die alte Geschichte die immer neu bleibt, noch wieder erzählen.

W. Zum Beispiel, dass ich Dich liebe!

A. Wieder!

W. Ich—sie kommen!

Enter George and Margaret.

A. Das macht nichts. Fortan!

(*George unties M.'s bonnet. She re-ties his cravat—interspersings of love-pats, etc., and dumb-show of love-quarrelings.*)

W. Ich liebe Dich.

A. Ach! Noch einmal!

W. Ich habe Dich von Herzen lieb.

A. Ach! Abermals!

W. Bist Du denn noch nicht satt?

A. Nein! (*The other couple sit down, and Margaret begins a re-tying of the cravat. Enter the Wirthin and Stephenson, he imposing silence with a sign.*) Mich hungert sehr, ich *ver*hungre!

W. Oh, Du armes Kind! (*Lays her head on his shoulder. Dumb-show between Stephenson and Wirthin.*) Und hungert es nicht mich? Du hast mir nicht einmal gesagt—

A. Dass ich Dich liebe? Mein Eigener! (*Frau Wirthin threatens to faint—is supported by Stephenson.*) Höre mich nur an: Ich liebe Dich, ich liebe Dich—

Enter Gretchen.

GR. (*Tears her hair.*) Oh, dass ich in der Hölle wäre!

M. Ich liebe Dich, ich liebe Dich! Ah, ich bin so glücklich dass ich nicht schlafen kann, nicht lesen kann, nicht reden kann, nicht—

A. Und ich! Ich bin auch so glücklich dass ich nicht speisen kann, nicht studieren, arbeiten, denken, schreiben—

STEPHENSON. (*To Wirthin — aside.*) Oh, there isn't any mistake about it—Gretchen's just a rattling teacher!

WIRTHIN. (*To Stephenson—aside.*) I'll skin her alive when I get my hands on her!

M. Komm, alle Verliebte! (*They jump up, join hands, and sing in chorus*)—

Du, Du, wie ich Dich liebe,
Du, Du, liebst auch mich!
Die, die zärtlichsten Triebe—

S. (*Stepping forward.*) Well!

The girls throw themselves upon his neck with enthusiasm.

THE GIRLS. Why, father!

S. My darlings!

The young men hesitate a moment, then they add their embrace, flinging themselves on Stephenson's neck, along with the girls.

THE YOUNG MEN. Why, father!

S. (*Struggling.*) Oh come, this is too thin! —too quick, I mean. Let go, you rascals!

GEO. We'll never let go till you put us on the family list.

M. Right! hold to him!

A. Cling to him, Will!

Gretchen rushes in and joins the general embrace, but is snatched away by the Wirthin, crushed up against the wall and threatened with destruction.

S. (*Suffocating.*) All right, all right—have it your own way, you quartette of swindlers!

W. He 's a darling! Three cheers for papa!

EVERYBODY. (*Except Stephenson who bows with hand on heart.*) Hip—hip—hip: hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!

GR. Der Tiger—ah-h-h!

WIRTHIN. Sei ruhig, you hussy!

S. Well, I've lost a couple of precious daughters, but I've gained a couple of precious scamps to fill up the gap with; so it's all right. I'm satisfied, and everybody's forgiven—(*With mock threats at Gretchen.*)

W. Oh, wir werden für Dich sorgen—du herrliches Gretchen!

GR. Danke schön !

M. (*To Wirthin.*) Und für Sie auch ; denn wenn Sie nicht so freundlich gewesen wären, krank zu werden, wie wären wir je so glücklich geworden wie jetzt ?

WIRTHIN. Well, dear, I *was* kind, but I didn't mean it. But I ain't sorry—not one bit —that I ain't.

Tableau.

S. Come now, the situation is full of hope, and grace, and tender sentiment. If I had in the least the poetic gift, I know I could improvise under such an inspiration (*each girl nudges her sweetheart*) something worthy to—to—is there no poet among us ?

Each youth turns solemnly his back upon the other and raises his hands in benediction over his sweetheart's bowed head.

Both youths at once.

Mir ist als ob ich die Hände
Aus Haupt Dir legen sollt—

They turn and look reproachfully at each other—the girls contemplate them with injured surprise.

S. (*Reflectively.*) I think I've heard that before somewhere.

WIRTHIN. (*Aside.*) Why the very cats in Germany know it!

Curtain.

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